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ABSTRACT

This report presents the research and development undertaken in the first year of a 3-year project to develop a Model Leadership Training Program for charter-school founders. The report provides detailed descriptions and analysis of charter schools' leadership needs and what is required to found and sustain a successful charter school. The text describes the study's context and methodology, current research, a pre- inventory, design team recommendations, and academy experience. The report concludes that charter-school leadership needs can be outlined in five core content areas: startup logistics and curriculum and assessment; leadership needs that vary according to school type; leadership needs that change radically during organizational transitions; the ability to develop a shared organizational vision and the training methods and styles used to communicate information to charter-school founders. Six appendices feature a charter-school pre-inventory application, evaluation forms, and other information. (RJM)

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A PROFILE OF THE LEADERSHIP NEEDS OF CHARTER SCHOOL FOUNDERS

September 1998

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A PROFILE OF THE LEADERSHIP NEEDS OF CHARTER SCHOOL FOUNDERS

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A PROFILE OF THE LEADERSHIP NEEDS OF CHARTER SCHOOL FOUNDERS

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Executive Summary

Preface

This executive summary provides an outline of the findings from the first-year report "A Profile of the Leadership Needs of Charter School Founders". The full report documents the research and development undertaken in the first year of a three-year project to develop a Model Leadership Training Program for Charter School Founders sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The report also provides detailed descriptions and analysis of the numerous leadership needs of charter school founders and the obstacles that charter school founders and leaders face in developing and sustaining successful schools. The general findings from the full report are summarized in the following list which describes the leadership needs of charter school founders.

- Charter school leadership needs can be outlined in five core content areas: Start-up Logistics, Curriculum and Assessment, Governance and Management, Community Relations, and Regulatory Issues. Expertise, or access to expertise, in each of these areas is deemed necessary to successful charter school development.

- Charter school leadership needs vary according to school type (new school, conversion school, small or large), operational status (pre-charter, pre-operational, operational), and founder experience.

- Charter school leadership needs change radically during organizational transitions – the shifts from the pre-operational stage, the operational stage, and the renewal stage. Sustainability may prove to be a greater obstacle to charter school success than start-up obstacles.

- The ability of charter schools, and school leaders, to develop an agreed upon organizational vision, including a governance process and organizational structure, is identified as key to the ongoing success of charter school development.

- The training methods and styles used to communicate information to charter school founders is equally as important, if not more so, than the appropriate training curriculum and materials. Charter school founders are extremely diverse in their learning styles and approaches to learning.

History

Charter schools are incredibly diverse. There are different types of charter schools. They are started for many different reasons; they serve various types of students, and utilize multiple teaching strategies. Charter schools, as publicly-funded schools of choice, are the current offspring of the ongoing struggle among advocates of vouchers, magnet programs, alternative education, and other reform initiatives. Indeed, many educators feel that charter schools, as a mechanism of school choice, represent the best opportunity to radically reform segments of the public school system that are currently failing the students of today.

The basic charter school concept is encompassed in the idea of "autonomy for accountability." Charter schools are public schools that are granted a specific amount of autonomy, determined by state law and/or the specific charter, to make decisions concerning the organizational structure, curriculum, and

educational emphasis of their school. Charter schools are granted waivers from certain regulations that typically bind public schools. In return for this additional autonomy, charter schools are held accountable for the academic achievement of the students in the charter school, and the school faces suspension or closure if accepted performance standards are not met.

The "autonomy for accountability" model of school reform grants a welcome amount of freedom to the founders of charter schools, but it also places a tremendous amount of responsibility on these individuals. Given that the founders of charter schools tend to be small groups (6-10) of parents, teachers, community members, and sometimes administrators, the existing barriers to the formation and operation of a charter school may sometimes appear insurmountable to a group without the diverse knowledge base and technical know-how needed to run a school. What do leaders of charter schools need to know to be successful? Lack of leadership skill in multiple areas threatens the very foundation, and future, of the charter school movement. Developing strong leaders and founders of charter schools is essential to the future success of charter schools and, more importantly, to the academic success of our students. This report attempts to support the development of charter school leaders by identifying exactly what are the barriers to charter school development and what charter school founders need to know to overcome those barriers.

This report identifies the needs of charter founders through ongoing research and training development including:

- Research of current literature and case-studies outlining the multiple obstacles and barriers facing charter school founders. Development of five core content areas of charter school leadership needs.
- Inventory of potential and existing charter schools applying to attend the program-sponsored Charter School Leadership Training Academy.
- Convening of a design team of charter school experts and practitioners to revise and update core content areas.
- Experience of Charter School Training Academy for 48 (12 teams of 4) potential and current charter school operators.

Findings

Core Content Areas

Preliminary research identified five areas of charter school leadership needs. Each of these areas contains specifics that are necessary to successful charter school development. Our ongoing research and development is based on the premise that successful charter school leaders require expertise, or the ability to access expertise, in each of the core content areas.

- **Start-up Logistics**. Charter school founders require expertise in areas such as building an organizational and leadership vision, acquiring a facility, establishing a legal entity, acquiring necessary start-up funds, and numerous other first steps.

- **Curriculum and Assessment**. The ability to develop an academically rigorous curriculum that is true to the school mission and aligned with program and student assessments is a key component of charter school sustainability. Developing appropriate accountability mechanisms is an important leadership ability.

- **Governance and Management**. Charter school founders must develop a stable organization with an accepted governance body and accepted policies guiding both long-range planning and day-to-day operations. Founders should also have expertise, or access to expertise, in developing a sound financial plan that is compatible with school vision and fiscal realities.

- **Community and Public Relations**. Charter school founders should have the ability to deal with controversy, work with the media, and develop positive relationships with interest groups in their community, including the local district, school board, and/or local teachers union.

- **Regulatory Issues**. Charter school founders should be aware of the multitude of federal and state regulations for which all public schools, including charter schools, are accountable. These include special education, health and safety regulations, liability issues, marketing issues, and a host of other state-specific regulations.

Pre-inventory Application

Charter schools that wished to attend a Charter School Training Academy completed a pre-inventory application. The results of the pre-inventory supported and reemphasized the five core content areas. Specifically, respondents to the pre-inventory highlighted five areas of need.

- Developing student and program assessments
- Developing governance policies
- Developing a financial plan
- Obtaining adequate facilities
- Accessing ancillary and external services

In addition to the aforementioned areas of need, the pre-inventory application also demonstrated that leadership needs vary according to year of operation. Operational schools tended to focus on governance issues and student and program assessments while pre-operational schools tended to focus on obtaining facilities and developing a financial plan, or simply locating funding.

Design Team

A design team of eight charter school experts met for 3½ days to provide additional insight into the core content areas and to develop the training for the Charter School Leadership Training Academy. In addition to reemphasizing the core content areas and designing the training Academy, the design team made six distinct contributions to the profile of leadership needs of charter school founders.

- **Difference between pre-operational and operational charter schools.** The design team emphasized the difference in leadership needs in pre-operational and operational charter schools. Specifically, the design team highlighted the organizational and governance obstacles facing charter schools transitioning from the pre-operation to operational stage and from the first couple years of operation to the renewal stage.

- **The need for a strong organizational vision**. The design team stressed the need for all charter schools to have a strong organizational vision that guides both day-to-day operations and long-term planning.

- **The need for an agreed upon organizational structure**. The design team stressed the need for an agreed upon organizational structure. A strong organizational vision, actualized in a specific governance model and/or governing board policies, contributes to organizational sustainability and the ability of a charter school to adapt to changing social, political, and fiscal situations.

- **The need to evaluate the political and community environment (reality check).** Design team members stated that all potential charter school operators should evaluate the political and fiscal realities of starting a charter school before jumping into something that they may not be ready for. Taking into consideration the community context and fiscal realities may help potential charter schools map out a plan of action and survive the first few months of charter school development.

- **Differences in leadership needs based upon type of school (new or conversion).** Design team members stressed that newly-created schools and conversion schools have distinctly different leadership requirements. For instance, new schools typically need help finding a facility, organizing finances, and getting "up and running". Conversion schools, on the other hand, typically have more trouble with local politics, district regulations, and questions of autonomy.

- **Different types of accountability (fiscal, public, academic).** Design team members felt that potential charter school founders not only need to be aware of the importance of "accountability" in general, but they need to be aware of different types of accountability. Depending on state law and local context, either fiscal, public, or academic accountability may be the measuring stick used to decide the fate of charter schools. Awareness and appreciation of each type of accountability, and how they relate to each other, are important leadership skills.

Leadership Training Academy

The intent of the Leadership Training Academy was to pilot test the training and curriculum designed according to design team specifications and ongoing research. The Training Academy was developed under the premise that there is an important distinction between (1) the curriculum and information charter school founders need, and (2) the actual training methods and strategies used to present this information. Appropriate training is just as much a "leadership need" as are appropriate information and resources. The following findings and recommendations from the Training Academy relate to the dilemma of trying to design training and curriculum for a group of charter school founders with diverse learning styles and approaches.

Training Recommendations

- Training for charter school developers should include access to, and training by, successful current and past charter school founders. Telling of stories and experiences by trainers was important and beneficial to all Academy participants.

- Training sessions should be organized and stay on target. Some sessions should be facilitated and have a set structure which allows for both interaction and direct instruction. Sessions should vary according to content and audience.

- Participant sharing is important. Some sessions, or at least a section of each day, should allow some time for participants to share ideas and experiences.

- Sessions should be diverse in style and methodology. For instance, sessions on program evaluation could be designed to provide concrete examples; or sessions could focus on different types of program evaluations and aim toward provoking critical thought.

- Training sessions focusing on aligning curriculum and assessment and designing program and student evaluation instruments should be emphasized. A variety of teaching strategies and methods could be used in curriculum and assessment sessions.

- The training cohort should be diverse both in ethnicity and perspective.

- State-specific sessions should be designed and utilized. Using state contacts or state representatives to lead these sessions is recommended.

Leadership Needs (Leadership Profile Additions)
In addition to the training requirements listed above, the Training Academy highlighted four additional leadership needs to be included in the final profile of charter school leadership needs.

1. Charter school leaders need high-quality, structured information on aligning curriculum and assessment, and developing student and program assessment instruments and strategies.

2. Charter school leaders need the ability to share experiences with other new charter school developers and learn from each other. Charter school founders need to network.

3. Charter school leaders need the ability to talk with experienced charter school founders and learn about different ways of approaching problems and obstacles.

4. Charter school leaders need to be exposed to new ways of thinking about public education and their own role in improving public education.

The following matrix outlines the profile of leadership needs of charter school founders and leaders as summarized in this executive summary and detailed in the complete report.

A Profile of the Leadership Needs of Charter School Founders and Leaders

Content Areas	Topics of Knowledge and Skills
Start-Up Logistics	Reality checks (political environment, fiscal feasibility, sustaining energy, relationships) Writing a good application Making things different (resource allocation, power structure, instructional changes) Building organizational vision Formation of core founding group Establishment of a legal entity Acquisition of a facility Availability of necessary start-up financing Acquisition of professional services (i.e., legal, accounting) Develop a business plan
Curriculum Standards and Assessment Development	Development of academically rigorous curriculum true to school vision Accountability and evaluation: Development of student and school measures of performance Curriculum options Renewing the charter
Governance/ Management	Organizational structure: governance, management, operations Personnel issues Develop internal policies (finance, personnel, student discipline, child abuse, enrollment, etc.) Evaluation of governing board Managing growth Liability issues (insurance workers' compensation) Contracting for services
Community Relations: Internal and External	Dealing with controversy Dealing with interest groups Media relations Community relations Relationships with district and/or sponsoring agency Communicating parent expectations Marketing the charter school
Regulatory Issues	Equity in serving student populations Special education requirements Assuring health and safety Individual rights Religious issues Student records and freedom of information Civil rights regulations Parental involvement requirements State laws and regulations Types of charter schools (for profit, private conversion) Awareness of legal options
Leadership Training Requirements	High-quality, structured information on student and program assessment plans and tools The ability to share experiences and learn from other new charter school developers The ability to talk with, and learn from, experienced charter school practitioners Exposure to new ways of thinking about public education and their own role in improving public education State-specific information

A PROFILE OF THE LEADERSHIP NEEDS OF CHARTER SCHOOL FOUNDERS

Introduction

Charter Schools

Charter schools are incredibly diverse. There are different types of charter schools. They are started for many different reasons; they serve various types of students, and utilize multiple teaching strategies. Charter schools, as publicly funded schools of choice, are the current offspring of the ongoing struggle among advocates of vouchers, magnet programs, alternative education, and other reform initiatives. Indeed, many educators feel that charter schools, as a mechanism of school choice, represent the best opportunity to radically reform segments of the public school system that are currently failing the students of today.

Traditional school choice reform initiatives focus on improving the ability of parents and students to attend the school of their choice regardless of socioeconomic level and, to a limited degree, location. Charter schools supplement school choice reforms with two additional forms of choice. First, charter schools grant parents and teachers the ability to create and attend a new school free from most bureaucratic restraints and in accordance with their own vision (new schools). Second, parents and teachers have the ability to transform, or restructure, an existing school to obtain organizational, fiscal and curricular autonomy (conversion schools). Add to this new conception of choice the traditional arguments for choice—increased innovation, competition, accountability, increased alternatives, equity—and it is easy to see that charter schools present an entirely new way of thinking about, implementing, and exercising choice in the public school system. On the downside, charter schools, because of the opportunities they provide, introduce a whole new set of obstacles to successful school development and improved student achievement.

The basic charter school concept is encompassed in the idea of "autonomy for accountability." Charter schools are public schools that are granted a specific amount of autonomy, determined by state law and/or the specific charter, to make decisions concerning the organizational structure, curriculum, and educational emphasis of their school. Charter schools are granted waivers from certain regulations that typically bind public schools. In return for this additional autonomy, charter schools are held accountable for the academic achievement of the students in the charter school, and the school faces suspension or closure if accepted performance standards are not met.

The "autonomy for accountability" model of school reform grants a welcome amount of freedom to the founders of charter schools, but it also places a tremendous amount of responsibility on these individuals. Given that the founders of charter schools tend to be small groups (6-10) of parents, teachers, community members, and sometimes administrators, the existing barriers to the formation and operation of a charter school may sometimes appear insurmountable to a group

without the diverse knowledge base and technical know-how needed to run a school. What do leaders of charter schools need to know to be successful? Lack of leadership skill in multiple areas threatens the very foundation, and future, of the charter school movement. Developing strong leaders and founders of charter schools is essential to the future success of charter schools and, more importantly, to the academic success of our students. The first step in this process is to identify exactly what are the barriers to charter school development and what do charter school founders need to know to overcome those barriers.

Charter School Leadership

Recent research on charter school development and implementation has done an excellent job describing the multiple pitfalls and barriers which complicate the development of charter schools and many times influence their success or failure. These barriers include the lack of start-up funds and building sites, lack of organizational and financial skills needed for the sustained operation of the school, and policy and regulatory issues such as special education requirements, acquisition of Title I funds, and the hiring of uncertified teachers (RPP International and University of Minnesota, 1997).

These barriers, among others, continue to exist and impede the development of new and existing charter schools. Most of the present and potential charter school founders possess the desire, ingenuity, and passion necessary to develop and sustain a charter school. However, many of these individuals do not possess all of the technical know-how to handle the administrative, financial, and public relations duties which go hand in hand with the development of a charter school. The development and administration of a charter school is not as easy as simply incorporating new or different teaching strategies into the curriculum. The autonomy necessary for innovative teaching requires that founders and leaders of charter schools take on diverse tasks that are not familiar even to some of the most knowledgeable school administrators.

From a broad perspective, the basic difficulty facing charter school founders is a lack of expertise in one or more of the multiple leadership areas needed to set up and administer a school. Each area in which there is a lack of expertise is a barrier to the success of the school. Based on this perspective, the leadership needs of charter school founders include expertise, or the ability to access expertise, in the multiple areas identified as necessary to develop and operate a charter school.[1] The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed description—a profile—of the

[1] Much attention has been placed on charter school leadership framed as "areas of expertise", or specific skills, needed to successfully develop and operate a charter school. A review of the literature and NWREL's experience tends to support this particular view of charter school leadership. However, this perspective discounts the possibility that charter school leadership needs are solely leadership skills as traditionally defined. Distinct from the need to acquire expertise in multiple areas is the ability of a leader (or leaders) to create and sustain a viable organization through a variety of techniques and strategies. The development of traditional leadership skills is touched upon in this report; however, it is noted that traditional leadership skills are only a component of the leadership needs identified in this report. While an argument can be made that development of expertise in multiple areas does not specifically address the leadership needs of charter school founders, NWREL feels that the fundamental nature of charter schools, representing a shift away from the traditional organization structure of public schools, requires the concept of leadership to be expanded to include whatever areas needed to develop a successful charter school.

leadership needs of charter school founders and provide specific recommendations to further guide both the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's (NWREL) own current project and other efforts to develop high quality training, education, and assistance to charter school developers.

This report has six sections. Section one provides a review of the methodology and context that forms the basis for this report. Section two provides a brief review of the current literature which formed the basis for the original core leadership areas and informs our current findings. Section three summarizes the discussions and recommendations of an eight-person expert design team. Section four summarizes findings from a pre-inventory of 40 charter school applicants. Section five summarizes the experiences of the 1998 Charter School Leadership Training Academy and pre- and post-evaluation of Academy participants. Section six summarizes the findings of the report and presents a profile of the leadership needs of charter school founders and leaders.

Section One: Context and Methodology

Context

The research and information collection completed for this report is part of a two-year project to develop a model leadership training program for charter school founders and leaders. The main components for each year of this project are (1) initial research and development of core content areas of leadership needs; (2) identification, pre-inventory, and selection of eligible charter schools to attend a training academy; (3) convening a design team meeting; and (4) development and implementation of training curriculum in a summer academy for 48 charter school founders and leaders. A brief description of this project is provided as context for the remainder of this report.

Preparatory research, completed as part of the original contract submission and revision, outlined five specific *core content areas* of charter school leadership needs. These areas were identified as areas in which charter school founders must have expertise, or access to expertise, in order to successfully develop and implement a charter school. The five core content areas, as presented in Table 1, formed the basis for the refinement and development of the leadership needs of charter school founders and the training curriculum developed to address those needs. The second component of the project was the identification of eligible teams of charter school founders and leaders.[2] Eligible applicants, identified through state and local charter granting agencies, were asked to complete a pre-inventory as part of the application process (see Appendix A). The pre-inventory findings are summarized in Section Three. The third component of the project was the convening of eight charter school practitioners, experts, and researchers for a 3½ day design team meeting (see Appendix B). The purpose of the meeting was to further identify, refine, and develop the core content areas as well as the corresponding training curriculum. The design team recommendations, as presented in Section four, are based upon revision of the original five core content areas. The fourth component of the project is the week-long training academy for the 48 (12 teams of four) charter school founders and leaders. A summary of the experiences of academy participants, as well as results from a pre- and post-evaluation of the academy, is presented in Section five.

Methodology

The findings presented in this report are based upon a comparison and refinement of the original five core content areas developed in the initial stages of the project with the recommendations of the design team, the results of the pre-inventory, the experience at the training academy, and additional research on charter school leadership needs. Multiple methods of comparison were used to avoid the biases inherent in any single comparison.

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[2] State Departments of Education were contacted and asked to send out letters to all eligible planning and operational charter schools. In the event the State could not send out letters, NWREL identified and sent letters to all charter schools in that state.

Table 1
Initial Core Content Areas

Content Areas	Topics of Knowledge and Skills
1.0 Start-Up Logistics	1.1 Building a Leadership Vision 1.2 Mission Statement Development 1.3 Formation of Core Founding Group 1.4 Establishment of a Legal Entity 1.5 Acquisition of a Facility 1.6 Availability of Necessary Start-up Funds
2.0 Curriculum Standards and Development	2.1 Development of Academically Rigorous Curriculum True to School Mission 2.2 Consideration of Parent Expectations 2.3 Accountability: Development of Student and School Evaluation to Measure Success 2.4 Alignment of Evaluation with Curriculum and Mission
3.0 Governance/Management	3.1 Formation of Governing Body (Board of Directors) 3.2 Management Structure/Administrative Leadership 3.3 Hiring of Personnel 3.4 Organizational Skills 3.5 Financial Planning/Management
4.0 Public Relations/Media Relations	4.1 Dealing with Controversy 4.2 Dealing with Interest Groups 4.3 Media Relations 4.4 Community Relations
5.0 Regulatory Policy Issues	5.1 Equity in Serving Student Populations 5.2 Special Education Requirements 5.3 Assuring Health and Safety 5.4 Parental Involvement Requirements 5.5 Liability Issues (insurance, etc.) 5.6 State Laws and Regulations 5.7 Contracting for Services 5.8 Types of Charter Schools (for profit, private conversion) 5.9 Marketing the Charter School

The design team recommendations insert expert practitioner knowledge and experience into the development of a set of leadership needs and requirements. Every effort was made to include a diverse sample of charter school experts in the design team (see Appendix B) to ensure that their recommendations would generalize to a variety of charter schools.

The pre-inventory provides a relatively large information base of charter schools in the first year of operation and in the pre-operational stage within the seven-state region[3]. Every effort was made to invite all eligible charter schools in the seven-state region. The sample obtained is biased by a number of factors. First, we know that all eligible charter schools were not included in the original invitation to apply. Second, only schools that requested applications actually received a pre-inventory. Among schools that requested applications, the completion rate was low (60%). Thus, the pre-inventory is a measurement of the needs of charter schools that (1) were identified, (2) demonstrated a desire to attend a training academy, and (3) completed an application. Charter schools without current difficulties may not have been inclined to apply and thus were not included in the sample. The pre-inventory may tend to overemphasize charter school leadership needs. However, this may very well be the most important population to target for technical assistance—those who need it and are willing to ask for it.

The 1998 Leadership Training Academy gave NWREL staff the opportunity to observe and test a variety of leadership training curriculum and training methods. The results of the Academy experience, detailed in Section five, are derived from a pre- and post-evaluation of all Academy participants, individual session evaluations of all training sessions, trainer input and observation, and NWREL staff observation and recording of all training sessions. Particular attention was placed on the variety of teaching strategies used by trainers, participant perception of the quality of information provided in training sessions and the Academy workbook, and participant reaction to all training sessions and relevant information. The results of the Academy experience highlight the importance of appropriate teaching strategies in training a diverse group of charter school founders and leaders.

The methods used to provide comparison and refinement of the five core content areas are diverse and have a variety of validity biases. However, NWREL feels that the combination of the multiple research techniques (design team, pre-inventory survey, academy evaluation) combined with continuing research of the current literature allows for a relatively comprehensive profile of the leadership needs of charter school founders and leaders.

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[3] The seven states included in the first year of the project were Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, and Oregon. States included in the project either have charter school legislation or, in the case of Oregon, have an executive order to create charter schools.

Section Two: Current Research

Based on an extensive review of current literature, the charter symposium conducted by NWREL in November 1996, and analysis of proposed and actual solutions to problems facing charter school founders, five initial core content areas encompassing the vast majority of challenges facing charter school founders were identified. Although barriers to the success of charter schools do vary depending on the context of the specific charter law and the status of the charter school (new school, public conversion, or private conversion), most charter schools do demonstrate a common need for expertise and assistance in five core content areas. Each content area can be thought of as an area of expertise. Leaders in the charter school founding group should have proficiency in these content areas or be willing to hire someone with the required expertise. The original five content areas and topics, as displayed in Table 1 (page 5), served as the basis for design team discussions and revisions, the pre-inventory application, and preliminary academy curriculum development.

The five core content areas were developed with the understanding that charter school experience will produce a vast, dynamic knowledge base of issues and remedies and that refinements would be made throughout the course of the project. The following discussion outlines (1) the preliminary research base for the original five content areas, and (2) recent research leading to revisions and additions to the five core content areas.

Core Content Areas

Start-Up Logistics

Preliminary research into the category of start-up logistics identified six areas of leadership needs: (1) building a leadership vision; (2) mission statement development; (3) formation of core founding group; (4) establishment of a legal entity; (5) facility acquisition; and (6) availability of necessary start-up funds. Current research has supported these initial findings.

Leadership vision and mission development. The impetus for the development of a charter school usually comes from a core group of 6-10 individuals—teachers, parents, community members, and sometimes administrators—who share a common vision of educational improvement. The development of a shared vision and the explicit acceptance of this vision in a mission statement has been identified as one of the most important components of a successful charter school (Millot & Lake, 1996). Most charter school legislation requires a comprehensive mission statement as an integral part of a charter school proposal. The mission statement is the starting point for a comprehensive charter proposal that includes a curriculum, budget, identification of student needs and target population, and program and student assessment. Additionally, a mission statement that incorporates the shared vision of all the charter school founders serves as a framework for curriculum development, evaluation strategies, and the overall academic emphasis of the school.

Core founding group. The membership of the core founding group has been identified as an important component of charter school success and sustainability. Millot points out that the

founding group should seek a diverse membership who have a general knowledge of education with specialized skills and assets in areas such as administration, finance, or law (Millot & Lake, 1996). Members of the core founding group should be aware of the large amount of time and collective effort required to develop a charter school. A core founding group composed of individuals with diverse expertise, who share the same vision, will decrease the need to contract out for the necessary expertise and will increase the potential for success.

Legal entity. The legal status of charter schools varies by state law and the local charter agreement. Some states allow charter schools to form as independent, corporate, or non-profit legal entities. Other states only allow charter schools to exist under district control. The level of autonomy represented in the legal status of a charter school affects issues such as contracting for services, liability, and access to loans and other funds. Additionally, research has demonstrated that schools that obtain legal autonomy from the district have less of a chance of having positive relations with their district (Dianda & Corwin, 1994). In any event, legal status continues to be an area in which charter school founders should have knowledge and experience.

Facility acquisition. The acquisition of a facility to house the charter school and the availability of start-up funds for site development are additional challenges which face potential charter school founders. Federal funds may offset some of the need for start-up funds, although the lack of funds remains a major barrier in many states. The recent national report "A Study of Charter Schools" identified lack of start-up funds, inadequate operating funds, lack of planning time, and inadequate facilities as the four main obstacles to charter school development (RPP International and University of Minnesota, 1997). Close to 60 percent of the charter schools sampled in the RPP national study reported lack of start-up funds as a barrier to success (RPP International and University of Minnesota, 1997). The Hudson Institute's final report also found that fiscal issues, including facility acquisition, continue to hinder charter school development (Finn, Manno, Bierlein, & Vanourek, 1997). Charter school founders need to be aware of the availability of start-up funds, as well as the need to plan and search for a site which meets state and federal health and safety standards. Multiple charter school start-ups have been hindered by unforeseen building repairs and maintenance necessary to meet state and federal health and safety regulations (Nathan, 1996b). When start-up funds are not available, or additional money is needed for building repair, school founders need expertise in the acquisition of loans and/or other potential sources of money. Additionally, charter school founders should be aware of the various technical assistance organizations that can provide much needed assistance during the early stages of development.

Curriculum Standards and Development

Preliminary research into the category of Curriculum Standards and Development found two areas of leadership needs: (1) the ability to develop an academically rigorous curriculum true to the school mission, and (2) development of appropriate student and school performance measures. Current research both supports the initial findings and adds an additional topic, *awareness of curriculum options*, to this core area.

Development of academically rigorous curriculum. The success of charter schools will ultimately be judged by the academic success of the students in the classroom, whatever shape the classroom may take. To this end, the development of an academically rigorous curriculum that holds true to the educational mission of the charter school founders takes on the utmost importance. Charter schools use different teaching strategies, apply alternative staffing patterns, and focus on various core curricula and target populations (Finn, Manno, & Bierlein, 1996; Medler & Nathan, 1995). In order for a charter school to be successful, a curriculum should be developed which stresses high achievement and mirrors the core mission, yet does not jeopardize the charter school's status as a public institution. Charter school leaders need to be capable of developing and integrating an academically rigorous curriculum into the current political state of public education, while remaining true to the expectations of parents and their own vision.

Accountability and evaluation. A second component of curriculum development is the design and administration of a student and school evaluation to measure success. The demonstration of accountability in the form of a school evaluation is an integral part of the charter school contract. Most state charter school laws require that charter schools demonstrate accountability after five years. Recent state-level research evaluations have documented charter school achievement scores in light of charter specific accountability measures (see bibliography for the Colorado Department of Education's *1997 Colorado Charter School Evaluation Study* and the Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research's *Massachusetts Charter School Handbook*). Except for evaluations done by a limited number of states, and a number of privately supported charter school evaluations[4], there is little, if any, current information on the number of charter schools actively organizing information, in whatever form, to be used for evaluation purposes. The Hudson Institute's final report found that charter schools vary in their awareness of what accountability really means for their school and how to practically implement accountability mechanisms (Finn, Manno, Bierlein, & Vanourek 1997). Historically, most public schools have not been held accountable for results. As a result, real accountability measures are often difficult for teachers and administrators to conceptualize and implement. Charter school experts recommend that an evaluation plan, or a statement of the measures to be used in the evaluation, be incorporated into the charter school proposal or mission statement at the very beginning (Nathan, 1996a; Millot & Lake, 1996). Charter school founders must not underestimate the importance of reliable and clear evaluation standards and approaches.

Many charter schools are using the evaluation process as a strategy to not only find out how their students are doing, but also to find ways to improve staff and student performance (Nathan, 1996a). Familiarity with current standardized tests, as well as the ability to research and design alternative performance assessments highlighting strengths, weaknesses, student or faculty needs, and potential solutions to these problems, is a much needed leadership quality. Charter school founders should also be aware of the availability of outside organizations which specialize in school evaluation, accreditation, and self-study. Although charter school evaluation methods will vary according to different mission statements, curricula, and state regulations, every

[4] The Education Commission of the States, the Goldwater Institute, the Hudson Institute, and Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research have completed charter school evaluations.

evaluation should contain clear standards for measuring student success and be integrated into the curriculum at an early stage in school development.

***Additional findings**: Awareness of Curriculum Options*

As increasing numbers of community groups, parent groups, and other organizations begin to develop charter schools, awareness and knowledge of existing curriculum options is essential to the development of high quality schools. There is a substantial research base of different types of curriculum innovations, reforms, and back-to-basic curricula that can and is contributing to charter school development (see bibliography for Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's *Catalog of School Reform Models*, 1998). Some charter schools are actively using existing reform models. Seven of the 24 charter schools located in Colorado use the Core Knowledge curriculum derived from the work of E.D. Hirsch. The Charter Friends Network, a national organization working to support charter school development, recently published a guidebook specifically designed to help charter schools access the information contained in the *Catalog of School Reform Models*. Awareness of the many tested and successful school reform models and curricula will benefit charter school leaders in the coming years.

Governance/Management

A variety of external (i.e., funding, political opposition) and internal factors influence the success of charter school governance models. The governance/management core content area focuses primarily on internal factors contributing to success or failure. Preliminary research into the governance/management core content area identified five initial topics of leadership needs: (1) formation of a governing body; (2) management structure and administrative leadership; (3) hiring of personnel; (4) organizational skills; and (5) financial planning and management.

Ongoing review of current research led to reorganization of the five topics and highlighted a number of additional topics. The original topics "formation of a governing body", "management structure and administrative leadership", and "organizational skills" were regrouped under the category "organizational structure". Additional topics in the governance/management core area based on further research include *policy development*, *managing growth*, and *organizational transition*.

Organizational structure. The organization and management of a charter school has been identified as one of the most difficult tasks facing charter school founders and leaders (RPP International, 1997; Finn, Manno, Bierlein, & Vanourek 1997). All organizations have difficulty sustaining themselves, however, new organizations, in this case newly created schools, often face tremendous odds against developing a stable and viable organization (Loveless & Jasin, 1998). A number of charter schools with innovative curriculum, teaching strategies, and evaluation methods have failed or encountered time-consuming reorganization due to lack of expertise with the administrative duties required to run a school (Thomas, 1996). A recent report on Massachusetts charter schools found that governance has been a significant barrier to school success (Weiss, 1997). The recent Colorado *1997 Charter Schools Evaluation Study* found that existing charter school leaders recommended that governing boards undergo board training and

that boards should "define the governance structure thoughtfully, thinking about the balance of representatives among parents, community members, students, and staff (Colorado Department of Education, 1997).

Management and governance structures vary according to the charter mission, the beliefs of individuals in the core founding group, and local context. Although management structures do vary, charter school experts recommend the creation of a board of directors composed mainly of members of the founding group and the delegation of power to an appointed chief executive officer who is solely responsible for the operation of day-to-day activities (California Network of Educational Charters (CANEC), 1997; Millot & Lake, 1996). According to this model of governance, the charter school governing body (i.e., board of directors) sets up all general policy ensuring alignment with school mission while the CEO, or principal, takes responsibility for day-to-day operations. The Colorado *1997 Charter Schools Evaluation Study* recommends that governing bodies focus "...on long-term policy issues and give the director and staff day-to-day management responsibilities" (Colorado Department of Education, 1997). Of course, charter schools are diverse by nature and the management structure of any school will ultimately be defined by the vision and mission of that particular school. Charter school leaders understanding of the importance and need to develop specific administrative structures and policies will contribute to the development and stability of emerging charter schools. Aligning the governance model and the day-to-day management structure with the mission and vision of the school is essential to charter school success.

Hiring personnel. A second area of leadership need is the hiring of quality personnel. Charter school experts stress the need to hire teachers with the same vision as the members of the founding group (Nathan, 1996a). Although there is no hard evidence, a number of charter schools have undergone dramatic staff changes in the first year of operation because of incompatibility or other issues. The Hudson Institute identified staff malfunction as one of the 12 main start-up problems facing charter schools. Lack of time, incomplete reference checks, and lack of attention to mission and curriculum compatibility were cited as major factors in staff problems (Finn, Manno, Bierlein, & Vanourek, 1997). Charter school leaders need to have expertise, or access to expertise, in attracting and hiring quality teachers who share the school's vision.

Financial planning. Charter school leaders need to acquire or have access to the expertise and knowledge needed to develop a stable and accurate budget. Many charter school founding groups, especially in the case of new charter schools, lack the specialized expertise needed to develop and administer a school budget. New charter schools are, in many ways, run like a new business. Expertise is needed, especially in the case of large schools, to keep accurate records and budgets contributing to both economic stability and fiscal accountability. Furthermore, the development of a financially stable budget can serve as a guide for the entire school reflective of the school mission. The need for a solid budget and financial plan cannot be overemphasized. The lack of sound fiscal controls is a major cause of charter revocation.

***Additional findings**: Policy Development, Managing Growth, Organizational Transition*

Policy Development. The development of written policies for decisionmaking at each juncture of the school's development, including an organizational structure to guide day-to-day activities, has been identified as an important component of charter school success. However, much of the information regarding the need for policies and procedures is anecdotal and, in many cases, contradictory. A review of a number of charters reveals that some charter schools have detailed policy handbooks while other schools have only a few written policies. Some charter school guidebooks have extensive instructions on creating policy while others only mention policy development in passing (see bibliography for Colorado Department of Education's *1997 Colorado Charter School Evaluation Study* and the Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research's *Massachusetts Charter School Handbook*). There is also debate over how extensive policy should be or even if charter schools need to have policy written before they start operations. In any event, the fact that federal law requires written policy on a number of issues and that a variety of charter schools have run into trouble over policy tends to support the need for expertise in policy development.

Managing Growth. Managing growth is one of the new leadership needs that arises in charter schools as they enter their second and third year of operation. The Hudson Institute's final report found that charter schools face three enrollment challenges: (1) not enough students; (2) too many students of a particular group; and (3) increases in the number of students with particular needs (Finn, Manno, Bierlein, & Vanourek, 1997). Add to these challenges the over enrollment in many charter schools, and charter school leaders are faced with new and unfamiliar challenges. Charter school leaders must understand the importance in having policies that guide decisions regarding changes in enrollment patterns. Further, leaders must be aware of the federal and state guidelines that regulate public school enrollment practices. The potential impact of increases or decreases in growth should be thought out at an early stage in charter school development.

Organizational Transition. The transition from the planning stage of charter school development to the operational stage has been a problematic area for charter schools. Charter school founders are frequently unprepared for the transition from the goal-oriented process of creating a charter school to the day-to-day operation of the schools (Thomas, 1996). Loveless and Jasin (1998) report that charter schools are experiencing difficulty making the transition from informal organizations to formal organizations. They suggest that "by adopting protocols for completing critical tasks and by establishing permanent structures for school governance and administration, charters must mature into formal organizations". Weiss (1997), in her study of Massachusetts charter schools, found that "creating a collaborative decisionmaking structure that is also efficient is causing a great deal of stress at several of these schools. The Hudson Institute's final report on charter schools found that governance problems were a major concern for schools in the first year of operation (Finn, Manno, Bierlein, & Vanourek, 1997). The major governance problem, reports the Hudson Institute, is the clash between the founders of the school and the teachers and educators involved in day-to-day activities.

As charter schools move into the operational stage, founding members typically become members of the governing board and stay involved in the school. However, the passion and

vision required to start charter schools are not necessarily the traits needed to manage day-to-day operations. "Zealous parents, in particular, often have difficulty yielding the school's reins to educators" (Finn, Manno, Bierlein, & Vanourek, 1997). Expertise is needed both in the early stages of development to avoid governance problems and micro-management and in the later stages of development as members of the founding group begin to leave the school and the governing body. Permanent and accepted structures and policies must be in place to ensure the stability and sustainability of the charter school.

Public Relations/Media Relations

Preliminary research into the core content area of public and media relations highlighted four main topics of leadership needs: (1) dealing with controversy; (2) dealing with interest groups; (3) working with the media; and (4) community relations. Additional research supported the initial findings and identified two additional topics, *relationships with the district or sponsoring agency* and *marketing the school.*

Dealing with controversy and interest groups. Charter schools are currently a very contentious topic in the media and among different interest groups in society. Charter school proponents take on many forms and claim various political ideologies. Charter school founders need to understand that their school, as a recipient of public funding, will be open to public criticism, scrutiny, and praise. Furthermore, founders will have to learn to deal with controversy from a variety of sources, including local teacher unions, school boards, local community groups, and parents. Loveless and Jasin (1998) report that charter school founders, especially those located in small towns, face two distinct types of political opposition—opposition from the local district and teachers unions, and, surprisingly, opposition from the local community. The recent RPP national study found that pre-existing (conversion) charter schools are particularly challenged by political constraints such as union and school board opposition (RPP International and University of Minnesota, 1997). These controversies are potential sources of anxiety for the founders of the charter school. Excessive controversy within a local community may affect the teaching and administration within the charter school and reflect negatively on the academic achievement of the students.

Community relations and working with the media. Because of political opposition, charter school founders need to learn and identify strategies to gain support and legitimacy both in their community and from local school boards and teacher unions. As the political culture shifts and social opinion concerning charter schools and other forms of school reform changes and becomes more structured, charter schools will need to be prepared to use and work with the media and other public groups to survive and thrive. The Colorado Charter Schools Evaluation Study found "developing strong relationships with parents and the community" to be the number one technical assistance need for operational charter schools (Colorado Department of Education, 1997). Expertise in public and media relations will assist charter school leaders to address the local and national controversy. Additionally, a strong focus on public relations will be useful in forming alliances with community and state stakeholders who can champion future efforts.

***Additional Findings**: District Relationship and Marketing*

Forming a positive, or at the very least, a working relationship with the sponsoring district and/or district in which the charter school is located contributes strongly to successful charter school development. The ability to access a district's personnel services, special education services, or physical plant services can and do remove some of the initial burdens to charter school start-up. Many charter schools specify in their charter that the district will provide X,Y, and Z services for a specified deduction from the student per pupil expenditure (PPE). On the other hand, charter schools have also had problems with districts withholding large portions of the PPE while not providing the appropriate services. In Arizona, some districts attempted to deny credits to students who were transferring to district schools from charter schools (Finn, Manno, Bierlein, & Vanourek, 1997). The ability to negotiate a fair and workable agreement with the district is integral to the success of many charter schools. Loveless and Jasin (1998) report that many charter school founders have experienced substantial difficulties working with district and state level agencies in the areas of special education. Charter school leaders need to develop techniques and means to continue to build upon current relationships with their district office as well as develop new relationships when none currently exist.

Marketing is another area where charter school leaders often experience new obstacles and difficulties. As the Hudson Institute final report found, charter schools are experiencing difficulty both finding students in general and finding and attracting too many students of one group or ethnicity (Finn, Manno, Bierlein, & Vanourek, 1997). Charter school legislation varies from state to state in terms of ethnic and socioeconomic guidelines for charter schools, the ability of charter schools to target certain student populations, and the ability of charter schools to offer specialized curriculum. Many times these requirements run in direct contradiction to the purposes and intent of charter school developers. Many charter school founders purposely offer a specialized curriculum and focus on a specific clientele. However, federal regulations require that marketing strategies must be directed toward all segments of the population and that charter schools cannot exclude any student for any reason. Charter school leaders need to be aware that there is a fine, and many times invisible, line between open recruitment focused on a particular curricular focus and covert, or inadvertent, exclusion of a certain group or ethnicity. As an example, a number of charter schools in North Carolina are running into problems because they serve substantially more African-American students than the district average. These schools face potential closure because North Carolina law stipulates that charter schools must be within a certain percentage of the district average. Understanding of federal guidelines as well as state and local regulations is needed to avoid potentially detrimental situations.

Regulatory Policy Issues

Preliminary research into regulatory issues affecting charter schools identified a number of policy issues. These issues are listed in Table 2. Additional research has supported initial findings and emphasized *special education* and *marketing* as particularly problematic for some charter schools.

Table 2
Regulatory Policy Issues

• Who does the school serve? (Equity)	• Special education
• Can you market your school?	• Liability issues (insurance/risk management)
• Who is hired to teach and administrate?	• Health and safety issues
• How extensively can one contract for private services?	• Parental involvement requirements and parental contracts
• Different types of charter schools (for profit, private conversion)	• Understanding and working with different state legislation and regulations
• Legal issues (public disclosure laws)	• Public accountability (accountable to whom?)

Regulatory issues. In addition to the concrete barriers to success which face present and potential charter school founders, there are also a number of state and federal regulations and policy areas that, if not addressed, might hinder the academic success of students in charter schools. Charter school founders should be fully aware of the potential influence and repercussions that their own decisions about issues such as marketing, admissions, and special education may have in the context of the current debate over education reform. Special education is already an issue that has caused problems for many schools and was subsequently addressed by the Office of Civil Rights. Awareness of policy issues and the multiple barriers to stability and success will contribute to the sustainability of charter schools and the achievement of academic success and high quality teaching.

Other Research Findings

Further review of the current literature on charter schools highlights one main topic that was not specifically addressed in the initial core content areas. The Hudson Institute final report and the *1997 Colorado Charter Schools Evaluation Study* both specifically found that charter school barriers, and the needs of charter school leaders, change substantially through three stages: (1) the planning and pre-operational stage, sometimes split into the planning stage and the start-up stage; (2) the first year of operation; and (3) schools in the second and third year of operation, or the renewal stage. NWREL's observations and data have supported these findings (see Sections three and four). Charter schools go through life cycles which are different and require specific training and information. For example, the *1997 Colorado Charter Schools Evaluation*

Study outlined the differences in the technical assistance needs for charter schools in the application phase, the start-up phase, and the operational phase. According to the Colorado study, schools in the application phase needed legal assistance and advice writing and negotiating the contract (71%) and assistance identifying various governance structures (42%); schools in the start-up phase needed assistance acquiring a facility (54%) and developing training for staff and board members (54%); schools in the operational phase needed assistance developing a relationship with the community and parents (54%), and fiscal issues (46%).

What does this mean for charter school founders and leaders and a "profile" of the leadership needs of these individuals? Are there mutually exclusive skills and needs for those in the planning stage and the operational stage? Are there two different profiles of leadership needs? While there are some obvious differences (i.e., start-up logistics compared to sustainability), we feel that the difference between skills needed in the planning stage versus the operational stage vary more in emphasis rather than actual content. Although there are different skills that are needed at different stages in the development of a charter school—it is not enough to simply give founders the means to start a school if they do not have the means to sustain that school—we feel that most of the skills needed at different stages are contained in the core content areas previously outlined in this report. In other words, the keys to sustainability can be found in the initial formation of a strong organization with a cohesive vision that ties together all components of the school. For example, training to develop a strong organizational structure, a skill needed in the early stages of development, will allow schools to quickly adapt to changes and, if needed, create a new marketing strategy or develop a new assessment plan. Charter school leaders need to have the ability and awareness to shift gears and develop and apply a different set of skills based upon their own local context and particular situation.

Section Three: Pre-Inventory

Methodology

The pre-inventory application (see appendix A) is a three-page questionnaire designed, in addition to serving as an application form, to (1) collect basic demographic and school characteristics information (grades served, ethnic population, type of school, year of operation, etc.), and (2) outline a profile of current charter school resources and areas of need. All schools that received and completed a pre-inventory application requested an application from NWREL. The process used to identify and recruit eligible[5] charter schools varied by state. In most states, eligible charter schools were identified with assistance from the state department of education charter school contact or liaison. State charter school contacts were notified of our project and asked to send a letter to all eligible charter schools informing them of the availability of the training. This initial letter asked interested charter schools to request a pre-inventory application from NWREL. In states where this process did not result in the expected number of applicants, NWREL, with state department of education approval, identified and sent letters to all eligible applicants. Pre-inventory applications were sent to 76 eligible applicants within the seven-state region. Forty applications were completed and returned. Figure 1 displays the actual number of application requests and submitted applications for the seven states.

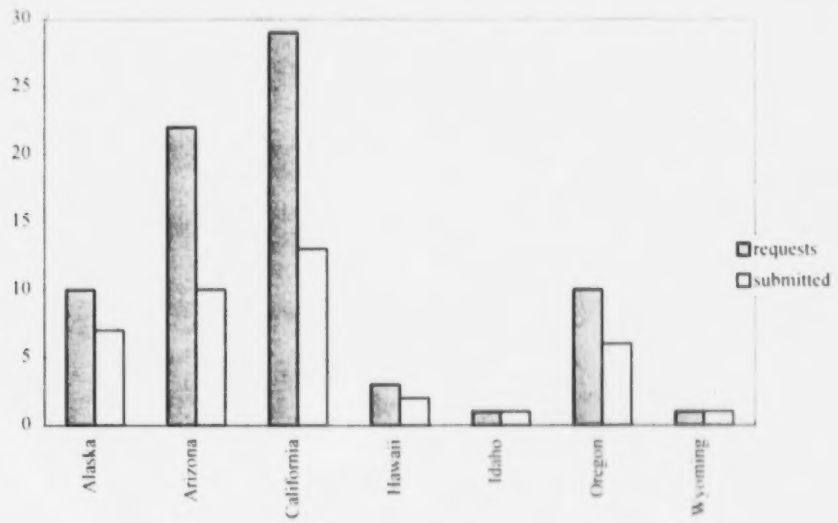

Figure 1
Number of Applications Requested and Submitted

[5] Eligible applicants were (1) Operational Schools: in the first year of operation (1997-1998 school year); (2) Pre-Operational Schools: with a charter and scheduled to open in the fall of 1998; and (3) Pre-Charter Schools: schools, or groups, currently planning and working to receive a charter from a charter granting agency:.

The number of requests and submissions partially reflects the actual number of charter schools in the seven states[6] and the timing of charter school laws. The relatively high proportion of responses from California and Alaska, when compared to Arizona, may be a result of two factors. First, the Alaska Department of Education was very active in recruiting charter schools to apply and 15 out of the 17 Alaska charter schools were either in the planning stage or in the first year of operation. Second, additional recruitment in California, both through the California Department of Education and the California Network of Educational Charters (CANEC), resulted in submitted applications from six pre-chartered groups/schools.

Demographics

The results of the pre-inventory revealed a diverse pool of applicants in terms of year of operation and grade levels served. However, 34 of the applicants were newly-created schools (see Figure 2) and were unable to provide complete information on ethnicity and poverty levels. Incomplete data on ethnicity and poverty was to be expected considering the number (n=18) of applicants in the pre-charter and/or pre-operational stage. The number of newly created schools is surprising in light of the RPP national study and other studies which found that between 64 and 70 percent of charter schools were newly-created. However, there are a number of possible factors contributing to the disproportionate number of applications from newly-created schools. It may be the case that: (1) newly created schools have a greater need for assistance; (2) the actual proportion of newly created schools is actually much higher than reported in the RPP national study; or (3) NWREL's identification and recruitment process failed to identify conversion schools. Figures 2, 3, and 4 display the number of applications submitted by type of school, year of operation, and grade level served.

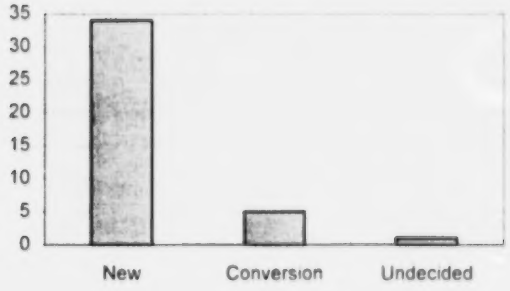

Figure 2. Number of Applications Submitted by Type of School

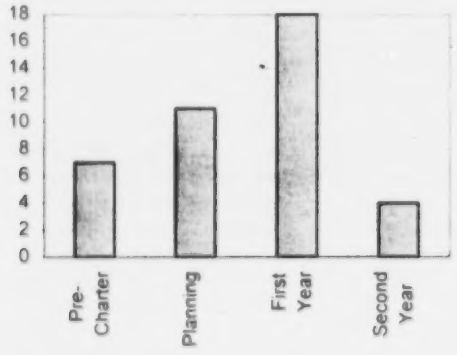

Figure 3. Number of Applications Submitted by Year of Operation

[6] As of July, 1998, Alaska: 17 schools; Arizona: 235 schools; California: 135 schools; Idaho: 1 school; Hawaii: 3 schools; Oregon: approximately 25 schools; Wyoming: 1 school.

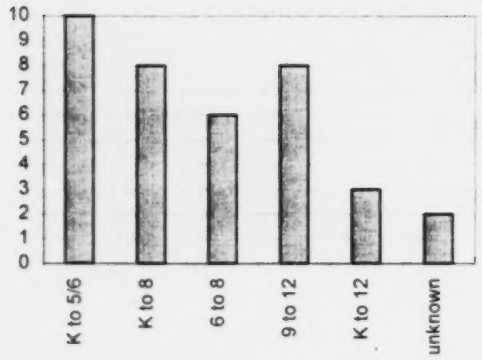

Figure 4. Number of Applications Submitted by Grade Level Served

Results

The pre-inventory application contained four questions specific to the leaderships needs of charter school founders (see Appendix A). Question #4 asked applicants to identify the policies and procedures that they currently had in place and if they wanted additional help developing the specific policies and procedures. Question #5 asked applicants to identify what areas of assistance and/or resources they had already acquired and if they wanted additional help developing or acquiring those resources. Table 3 displays the questions and categories used in questions #4 and #5.

Table 3

Policies and Procedures **Does your school have a policy for:**	**Technical Assistance** **Does your school have or use:**
Hiring/Firing	Mission
Student Assessment	Adequate Facilities
Program Assessment	Accredited
Governance	Ancillary Services
Health and Safety	Federal Programs
Fiscal Management	External Resources
Daily Operations	Financial Plan

Figure 5 and Figure 6 display the findings for questions #4 and #5.

Question #4:

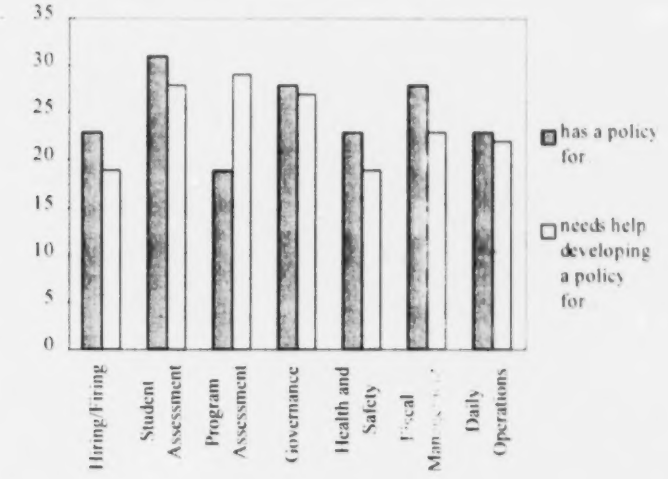

Figure 5. Policies and Procedures Currently in Place

Question #5:

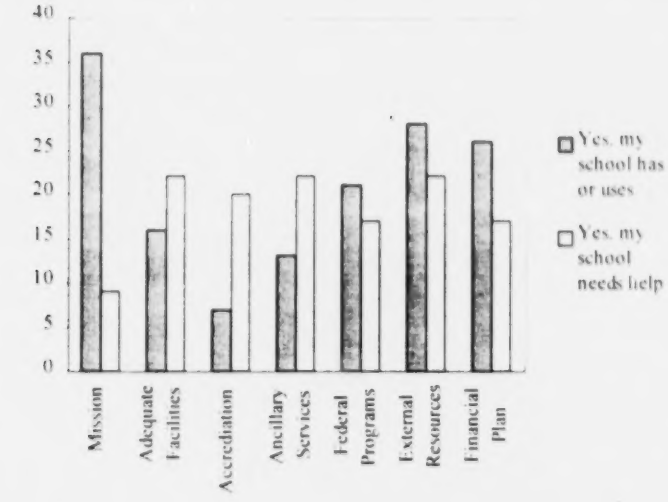

Figure 6. Areas of Assistance/Resources Already Acquired

Question #4

The results from question #4 led to some interesting observations. The number of schools stating that they did have policies for the given categories was relatively constant (average=25; 63% of total). The responses ranged from a high of 31 (78%) for student assessment and a low of 19 (48%) for program assessment. The fact that over 50 percent of the applicants did not have policies and procedures for program assessment indicates that program assessment is a leadership area that should be stressed in charter school training. Additionally, the greatest number of applicants (n=29; 73%) indicated that program assessment was an area they wanted help with.

Other information that was somewhat surprising was the fact that 28 (70%) applicants stated that they would like assistance with student assessment even though 31 (78%) applicants said that they had already developed student assessment policies. Overall, applicants expressed a high level of need for assistance developing policies for all the categories (average=24; 60%). Between 50 and 70 percent of applicants indicated that they need help developing policies in each specific area. Health and safety and personnel policies were the least noted categories of need. Program assessment, student assessment, and governance were the areas where applicants expressed the greatest need, with program assessment taking on particular importance based on the low number of applicants with policies already in place.

Question #5

The range of responses for the given categories in question #5 was significant. Thirty six (90%) out of 40 schools reported having a mission; 28 (70%) schools use external resources, and 26 (65%) schools have an existing financial plan. On the low end, only seven (18%) schools reported being accredited, 13 (33%) schools had access to ancillary services, and 16 (40%) schools had access to adequate facilities. The relatively high number of schools with a mission combined with the low (n=9; 23%) number of schools needing help developing a mission demonstrate that of all the categories, mission development is a low priority. However, the fact that almost one-fourth of all applicants still need help developing a mission indicates that this element must continue to be addressed.

After accounting for mission, the number of applicants indicating that they need help with the given categories was relatively constant at an average of 50 percent. Accessing external resources, ancillary services, and obtaining adequate facilities had the highest response rates (n=22; 55%) while accessing federal programs and developing a financial plan had lower response rates (n=17; 43%). Accreditation and ancillary services were the two areas with the greatest range between the number of schools indicating that they have access to those services and the number of schools that need help accessing those services. Access to adequate facilities was an area that we initially expected to display a greater level of need. In fact, when the school data is disaggregated by year of operation, we find that schools in the pre-charter or pre-operational stage have a much greater level of need in finding adequate facilities. This tells us that facility acquisition remains a concern and that charter school leadership needs do vary according to the stage and level of development. NWREL expects that the RPP national study

will find similar shifts in the barriers and obstacles facing charter schools (see bibliography for RPP International and University of Minnesota first year report of charter schools).

Open-ended questions

In addition to questions #4 and #5, applicants were also given the opportunity to respond in writing through open-ended questions to additional technical assistance concerns and their greatest hurdles in establishing their charter school (question #5 and question #6). Not all of the open-ended responses to question #5 identified specific technical assistance concerns. The responses that focused on specific concerns tended to be focused on problems developing a financial plan, difficulty accessing resources for ancillary services, and problems finding facilities.

The responses to question #6 add credence to the findings of the RPP national study as well as the previous results of the pre-inventory. Sixteen percent of the respondents indicated that finding a facility was the greatest hurdle. Likewise, 16 percent reported that funding (not specified) was the greatest hurdle. Other significant comments focused on compliance with government regulations, developing an organizational structure, developing a curriculum, communicating with the district, and developing a student population.

In general, the findings of the pre-inventory tended to support our initial core content areas. Response to all items on the pre-inventory was high enough to recommend continued focus and attention. Specifically, applicants expressed high levels of leadership needs and concerns in the following areas:

- Developing student assessment
- Developing program assessment
- Developing governance policies
- Developing a financial plan and fiscal management
- Obtaining adequate facilities
- Accessing ancillary services
- Accessing external services

In addition to the aforementioned areas of need, the pre-inventory also demonstrated that leadership needs vary according to year of operation. We also expected leadership needs to vary according to type (conversion or newly-created); however, we did not have the necessary number of applicants to observe any difference.

Section Four: Design Team Recommendations

The recommendations made by the design team were easily the most important and informative information gathered during this project. The design team gave credence to many of the core content areas of which we were initially unsure. More importantly, the design team made numerous additions and suggestions to the core content areas which might not have been added, or emphasized, if not for their input. Specifically, the design team added, or reemphasized, six topics to the core content areas. The six topical areas are:

1. Consideration of the difference between pre-operational and operational charter schools with a focus on the transition leaders must go through during this process

2. Reemphasis on the need for strong organizational vision

3. The need for an agreed upon organizational structure or governing board and written policies to support that organization

4. The need for leaders to do a reality check—check out the political and community environment to see what is really feasible

5. The idea that the leadership needs of charter schools vary by operational status (new schools versus conversion schools)

6. Regard accountability in terms of fiscal accountability, public accountability, and academic accountability

Many of the recommendations made by the design team tended to focus on the actual training of charter school founders rather than their specific leadership needs. For example, the idea that leadership needs vary by operational status tends to have more of an effect on the training emphasis rather than on the specific identification of different leadership needs.

Apart from these six additions, the design team agreed with most of the leadership needs as outlined in the initial core content areas. The design team initially wanted to separate the leadership needs of charter school founders into two distinct categories—pre-operational schools and operational schools. However, after looking at the core content areas and considering the pros and cons of creating two distinct categories, the design team decided that there were certain areas, such as organizational vision and a strong organizational structure, which would be better expressed as part of a continuous learning process rather than as separate categories. Thus, the basic structure of the core content areas was kept the same while additions were made whenever appropriate. The following is discussion of the six main recommendations made by the design team.

Difference Between Pre-operational and Operational (Transition)

One of the very first observations made by the design team was how difficult it was to categorize charter school leadership needs without accounting for differences in the stage of implementation. The design team also emphasized the fact that charter school leaders not only need to know how to open a school, but that they need to know how to sustain the school. In fact, some design team members stated that the obstacles facing charter schools in the renewal process will most likely be greater than start-up difficulties. Design team members advised that many of the core content areas, when applied in training, should have a particular emphasis and focus specific to the level of implementation of the charter school leaders and their schools.

In conjunction with the actual differences in need between pre-operational and operational schools, the design team also highlighted the difficulty many charter school founders have in making the transition from the goal oriented, action filled planning and pre-operational stage to the operational stage of development. Charter school leaders need to understand that there will be a change in responsibilities and duties when the school enters its first year of operation. However, design team discussion found that there is no one best way to adjust to the transition from planning to operation. Some experts warned against micro-management and recommended the formation of multiple committees and policies to structure the school while other members noted that they didn't have many policies and were simultaneously the founders of their school, teachers in the school, administrators, and on the governing board. The lesson learned from this discussion was that no specific recommendation is foolproof; local situations differ and all leaders should be aware that there is a transition and should prepare in some way for that transition.

Need for Strong Organizational Vision

Probably the most emphasized topic during the entire design team meeting was the need for a strong organizational vision that guides and coordinates all aspects of the charter. Design team members emphasized that the vision of the school should guide everything from planning the budget, designing curricula, and recruiting students, to developing a five-year plan, designing the assessment tools, and going through the renewal process. In other words, the ability of charter school leaders to develop, communicate, and integrate a vision throughout the school is essential to the success of the school. Specifically, the design team stated that leaders must be able to build the vision, communicate the vision, keep the vision, and renew the vision. This continuity of vision is what links the leadership needs of leaders in the pre-operational stage and leaders in the operational stage.

Need for an Agreed Upon Organizational Structure (Including Written Policies)

Corresponding to the emphasis on a strong organizational vision, design team members stressed that charter school leaders need to develop a strong organization based upon the vision of the school. Apart from this basic agreement that an organizational structure was needed, design team members differed on the types of governance models to recommend as well as the need for policies to structure the organization. The general discussion in the design team meeting

revolved around two different concepts, or models, of governance. About half the design team, through reference to John Carver's book *Boards That Make a Difference*, stated that charter schools should have a governing board responsible for long-term planning, a variety of committees focusing on different issues and policy development, and a CEO, or principal, responsible for the staff and day-to-day operations. They also recommended that, if possible, the governing board should ask prominent community members to serve on an advisory board.

On the other hand, some of the design team members, mainly from smaller schools, said that their organization simply developed "organically" in the process of developing their school. They did not have multiple committees, numerous policies, or a strict organizational model. In many instances the founders of the school were also the teachers, administrators, and board members. In any event, all design team members felt that the organizational structure should correspond to, and develop out of, the school vision. At this point in charter school development, understanding the importance of a strong organizational structure is more important than prescription of one type, or model of governance. Local context and need should be considered when developing an organizational structure.

Need for a Reality Check—Political and Community Environment

The very first, and probably most important, new contribution to the core content areas was the recommendation that charter school leaders need to do a "reality check" before they begin charter school development. Design team members stated that founders need to scan the political environment, the fiscal environment, and the community environment before they jump right into operating a charter school. Leaders need to ask the question "Is the charter school idea fiscally and politically feasible?" These recommendations were made from direct experience the design team members had in developing their own charter schools.

Many of the design team members felt that if they had really taken a good look at the local context before they had begun development, they would have been able to foresee, and possibly avoid, many of the barriers and obstacles that they faced. Charter school leaders need to find out if there really is money available, or if the community really does need and/or support the school. Awareness of potential adversaries, as well as proponents, before jumping right into battle can be very beneficial. It was also noted that a realistic evaluation of the political and fiscal environment might keep some doomed charter schools from ever opening. In this sense, a reality check has both positive and negative repercussions. While a realistic evaluation of local context might help some leaders avoid obstacles, that same evaluation might also stop some leaders from ever developing a school.

Leadership Needs for Charter Schools Varies by Operational Status

The design team, in discussing the original core content areas, found that there was not enough distinction made between the requirements of conversion schools and newly-created schools. For example, conversion schools often have a financial and organizational structure in place while new schools have to create an entirely new budget and governance structure. Conversion schools are often more concerned with academic achievement rather then realizing a vision. On

the flip side, new schools have to pay particular attention to fiscal barriers and other start-up logistics. To account for differences in leadership needs based on operational status, the design team recommended that the emphasis of training in applicable core content areas be altered to meet the particular needs of the trainees.

Accountability—Academic, Fiscal, and Public

The design team reemphasized the need for charter school leaders to understand the different types of accountability as well as the variety of assessment and evaluation tools used to demonstrate accountability. Specifically, the design team stressed that there are three interrelated types of accountability—academic, fiscal, and public. Each type is important, although it was noted that different types of schools, as well as different state and local contexts, tend to stress academic, fiscal, and public accountability at various levels. The design team agreed that the ability to demonstrate academic accountability was the key to charter school success. However, some of the design team members felt that fiscal accountability was equally important and, at least initially, more problematic for many newly created schools. Inner city conversion schools, on the other hand, felt more pressure to demonstrate academic accountability.

Left somewhat out of the equation was public accountability. While all design team members felt that the "public trust" was very important, it was unclear exactly what it meant to demonstrate public accountability. Some members thought that public accountability was simply a combination of academic and fiscal responsibility. Others felt that charter school leaders should, at all times, be aware that they were using public money and held the public trust. In conclusion, design team members stressed that charter school leaders should be aware that accountability can mean different things in different contexts and that they should be diligent in developing tools to demonstrate accountability at all levels.

Design Team Summary and Final Leadership Profile

The design team recommendations, combined with the results of the pre-inventory, led to the current core content areas listed in Table 4. We feel that these topics are essential to establishing successful charter schools. The key words in italics—next to the topics of knowledge and skills—identify each topic as an original topic, a new topic based on research, or a new topic based on design team recommendations. While we expect that some of these topics will shift in the coming years, this list summarizes the leadership needs of charter school founders and leaders and forms the basis for the training and curriculum. Based on the research and development during the first year of this project, we recommend that, in order to meet the needs of charter school founders, charter school training should cover all of the areas listed below.

Table 4
A Profile of the Leadership Needs of Charter School Founders and Leaders

Content Areas	✓	Topics of Knowledge and Skills
1.0 Start-Up Logistics		1.1 Reality checks (political environment, fiscal feasibility, sustaining energy, relationships) – *Design team* 1.2 Writing a good application – *Design team* 1.3 Making things different (resource allocation, power structure, instructional changes) – *Design team*
		1.4 Building organizational vision (renamed) – *Research, Design team* 1.5 Formation of core founding group – *Original* 1.6 Establishment of a legal entity – *Original* 1.7 Acquisition of a facility – *Original* 1.8 Availability of necessary start-up financing – *Original* 1.9 Acquisition of professional services (i.e., legal, accounting) – *Original* 1.10 Develop a business plan – *Design Team, Research*
2.0 Curriculum Standards and Assessment Development		2.1 Development of academically rigorous curriculum true to school vision – *Original* 2.2 Accountability and evaluation: Development of student and school measures of performance – *Original* 2.3 Curriculum options – *Research* 2.4 Renewing the charter – *Design team*
3.0 Governance/ Management		3.1 Organizational structure: governance, management, operations (revised) – *Design team* 3.2 Personnel issues – *Original* 3.3 Develop internal policies (finance, personnel, student discipline, child abuse, enrollment, etc.) – *Design team* 3.4 Evaluation of governing board – *Original* 3.5 Managing growth – *Research* 3.6 Liability issues (insurance workers' compensation) – *Original* 3.7 Contracting for services – *Original*
4.0 Community Relations: Internal and External		4.1 Dealing with controversy – *Original* 4.2 Dealing with interest groups – *Original* 4.3 Media relations – *Original* 4.4 Community relations – *Original* 4.5 Relationships with district and/or sponsoring agency – *Design Team, Research* 4.6 Communicating parent expectations – *Design Team, Research* 4.7 Marketing the charter school – *Design Team, Research*
5.0 Regulatory Issues		5.1 Equity in serving student populations – *Original* 5.2 Special education requirements – *Original* 5.3 Assuring health and safety – *Original* 5.4 Individual rights – *Original* 5.5 Religious issues – *Original* 5.6 Student records and freedom of information – *Original* 5.7 Civil rights regulations – *Original* 5.8 Parental involvement requirements – *Original* 5.9 State laws and regulations – *Original* 5.10 Types of charter schools (for profit, private conversion) – *Original* 5.11 Awareness of legal options – *Original*

Section Five: Academy Experience

The Charter School Leadership Training Academy was the culmination of the first year of a two-year project to develop a model leadership training program for charter school founders and leaders. The intent of the Leadership Training Academy was to pilot test the training and curriculum designed with the help and guidance of the design team and our own ongoing research and development. We believe that there is an important distinction between (1) the curriculum and information charter school founders need, and (2) the actual training methods and strategies used in presenting this information. While a training curriculum may, on paper, address all the leadership needs of charter school founders, this curriculum is potentially useless without appropriate training *methods* to communicate the appropriate information. In other words, the development of appropriate training methods and strategies to best meet the learning styles of charter school founders is just as important as identifying the leadership needs of charter school founders. To contribute to our understanding of appropriate training and curriculum for charter school founders, Academy participants were asked to complete a series of evaluations. Pre- and post-Academy evaluations, as well as individual session evaluations, were completed by each participant. Trainers were asked to record their thoughts and impressions of the Academy and report their observations to NWREL staff. NWREL staff attended all sessions and recorded the session format, information covered, and participant response. This section includes the results and observations of the Leadership Training Academy based on the aforementioned evaluation tools.

Academy Participants. Twelve charter school teams of four members each attended the Leadership Training Academy. Teams were selected from the pool of applicants who completed the pre-inventory application. Teams were selected on the basis of diversity (in school type, learning styles, year of operation, and student population), geographic location, and demonstrated need. The twelve teams selected for the Academy exceeded our greatest expectations with respect to the range of diversity and cultures represented. Table 5 outlines the demographic information for Academy participants.

The three most noticeable aspects of diversity among Academy teams included (1) the variety of learning styles and cultures; (2) the experience and "type" of founders represented in the various teams; and (3) the variety of social contexts and student populations facing the teams. The teams that attended the Academy included two inner-city, predominately African-American schools from Oakland and Los Angeles, a Waldorf inspired school in a California suburb, a school located on an Indian reservation, a school based in an Arizona University research park, five rural schools, three urban schools, and two schools with a home school focus. Couple this geo-political and ethnic diversity with the various learning styles (Core Knowledge, Waldorf, holistic, arts and music, and so on), as well as the different levels of experience and charter status, and it was clear to the Academy trainers (and NWREL staff) that we had more than met our goal to invite a diverse sample of current and potential charter school operators. Since developing a research-based leadership model that can be generalized and replicated on a nationwide basis is the focus of this project, the inclusion of a broad spectrum of charter school founders and schools was integral to the success of the Academy.

Academy Trainers. Seven charter school experts constituted the trainer core for the Academy. The trainers included four charter school practitioners, one state school board attorney, two NWREL staff members, and a representative from a major charter school consulting and finance organization. Of the four practitioners, all four are founders of charter schools, one is also a teacher in a charter school, two are currently charter school board members, and one is currently a co-principal of a charter school. (See Appendix C for a list of Academy trainers.)

Table 5
Leadership Training Academy: Participating Team Demographics

	State	Geo-political	Student Population	Learning style	Status	Grades served
Team 1	CA	Non-rural Urban	African American/ Latino	College prep with a strong community and cultural basis. Community service school model.	Pre -Oper.	6-8; 300
Team 2	CA	Non-rural Urban	African American/ minority	Community based "community learning center". Community service school model.	Operational	K-3; 260
Team 3	CA	Rural	14% minority	Home school driven. Students develop individual learning plans. One-on-one teaching.	Pre-Oper.	K-12; 75
Team 4	CA	Non-rural Suburban	Unknown	Waldorf inspired; holistic curriculum. Teachers follow student through all grades.	Pre-charter	K-5; ?
Team 5	AZ	Non-rural Urban	Unknown	Self-paced, computer-assisted instruction. Use of weekly field experience and school-to-work.	Pre-Oper.	9-12; 150
Team 6	AZ	Rural Reservation	Native American	Focus on cultural relevance of their heritage. Community-based school.	Operational	5-8; 175
Team 7	AZ	University based	18% minority	Strong school-to-work component with job shadowing and internships. Computer-based curriculum.	Operational	9-12; 135
Team 8	AK	Rural	Unknown	Stress high academic standards and mastery of basic skills. Strong parental involvement	Operational	K-8; 75
Team 9	AK	Non-rural Non-urban	13% minority	Core Knowledge; longer school day and school year.	Operational	K-6; 100
Team 10	OR	Rural	Unknown	Multi-age classrooms; intellectual and artistic learning; creative and open learning styles	Pre-Oper.	5-8; 48
Team 11	HI	Rural	60% minority	Address individual learning needs; increase school/community interaction. Increase in art and music classes.	Pre-charter	K-6; 300
Team 12	ID	Non-rural Non-urban	Unknown	Focus on high academic achievement, a "culture or scholarship", and a strong work ethic.	Pre-Oper	9-12; 100

Academy Structure. The Training Academy occurred over five days and ran all day (8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) on four of the five days. The final day of the Academy ended at approximately 2:00 p.m. The third day of the Academy included an afternoon picnic and team building exercises. Each day opened with a general opening session and most afternoons opened with a general session. Each morning and afternoon presented two concurrent sessions on different subjects. Teams were asked to send two team members to each of the sessions to facilitate learning from experience sharing. In most cases two trainers were present in each session.

The sessions focused on specific areas and topics drawn from the core content areas. Sessions were intentionally designed to cover all areas outlined in the core content areas. An Academy workbook was prepared for each Academy participant. The workbook was the main resource guide for Academy participants and contained a specific curriculum outline for each session as well as worksheets and additional resources. The sessions were not state specific due to the geographic diversity of Academy participants. However, participants and trainers were encouraged to "plug-in" state specific information when relevant. A listing of Academy sessions is provided in Table 6.

Table 6
Academy Agenda

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
		Morning Session		
Case Study in Visioning	Start-up Logistics: Facility Issues	Internal Policy Development: Personnel Issues	Marketing Your School	Special Education Issues
Core Founding Group and Accessing Experts	Start-up Logistics: Legal Status Issues	Internal Policy Development: Policy Development	External Community Relations	Federal Regulatory Issues
	Start-up Logistics: Business Plan		Dealing with Controversy	State Regulatory Issues
		Afternoon Session		
Writing a Great Application	Governance and Management: Leadership	Team Building	Academic Accountability	Establishing the Organizational Vision
Evaluation of Progress	Governance and Management: Transitions		Fiscal Accountability and Public/Parental Accountability	

Although it is impossible to deduce from the session names listed in Table 6, sessions tended to focus on two distinct aspects of leadership development. Specifically, training focused on either (1) how to develop, access, and implement *strategies* to accomplish a certain task (i.e. how to market your school, how to gain community support, or how to sustain the school as an organization), or (2) increasing participant knowledge base and understanding of specific topical areas (i.e. special education requirements, student and program assessment, or personnel policies). Essentially, this is a difference between strategies to accomplish a goal and general understanding of the necessary components of school development. This distinction is relevant in light of the results of the pre- and post-Academy evaluations.

Pre- and Post-Academy Evaluation

The pre and post versions of the Academy evaluation were identical three page questionnaires requesting basic demographic information (school type, affiliation, relationship to the school) and participant response along a number of topical areas that relate to charter school development and sustainability (Appendix D). On both the pre- and post-evaluation, participants were asked to (1) rate their school's current status in the listed areas, (2) rate their current level of knowledge in the listed areas, and (3) rate their ability to access appropriate information in the listed areas. Participants were also asked to note the five specific areas they felt they learned the most from and any area that they felt was not covered sufficiently. On the pre-evaluation, participants were also asked to select areas they felt were most important to the development of their school.

The knowledge areas in the Academy evaluation were grouped in six topical areas corresponding to the five core content areas and a sixth category, "policy areas". The six topical areas are *start-up logistics*, *governance and management*, *curriculum and assessment*, *policy*, *marketing and recruitment*, and *regulatory issues*. Each topical area was separated into specific areas corresponding to skills and information contained in the Academy workbook and provided by Academy trainers. The results of the pre- and post-Academy evaluation are presented in Appendix E.

The intent of the Academy evaluation was to measure participant level of knowledge and perceived ability to access information prior to the Academy and then measure the immediate effect of the Academy experience on participant knowledge base and ability to access information. It should be noted that participants were not tested on their actual acquisition of knowledge; rather, the evaluation measures participant self-reported perception of gain in knowledge base and ability to access information. Future site-based evaluations will attempt to measure the extent Academy participants implement and use information gained at the Academy.

Findings: Current Level of Knowledge and Ability to Access Information

Results from the pre- and post-evaluation demonstrate that participant perception of current level of knowledge and ability to access information increased in each area. Statistical analyses were performed to determine if there was a significant difference between pre- and post-evaluation ratings[7]. Results from the analyses demonstrate that differences between the pre- and post-evaluation for "current level of knowledge" was significant in 24 of the 31 areas. Increases in "participant ability to access information" were significant in 30 of the 31 areas. Table 7 lists the eight areas that did not have statistically significant increases.

Table 7
Areas Found To Have No Statistically Significant Change

Current Level of Knowledge	Ability to Access Information
Organizational Vision	Curriculum that matches school vision
Fiscal Management and Oversight	
Curriculum that matches school vision	
Student Assessment and Evaluation	
Program Evaluation	
Renewal Plan	
Student and School objectives, goals, and measures of performance	

Specifically, participants reported a significant increase in knowledge obtained and ability to access information in the Marketing and Recruitment topical area. On the other hand, participants reported a low increase in knowledge obtained and ability to access information in the Curriculum and Assessment core content area. The following tables (8, 9, 10, 11) list the five greatest and five lowest increases in mean score. Areas in the Marketing and Recruitment core content area are listed in **bold**. Areas in the Curriculum and Assessment topical area are in *Italics*. The range of scores for the following tables is 1 (low) to 10 (high).

Table 8
Areas with the Largest Increase (Difference) in Mean Scores in Level of Knowledge

Content Areas	Mean Increase
Developing and writing a quality application	2.56
Marketing strategies	2.45
Strategies to deal with controversy	2.42
Strategies to gain public, community, and school board support	2.06
Media and public relations strategies	2.02

[7] A one-tailed, two sample t-test (alpha=.05) was used to compare unmatched pre- and post-evaluation ratings.

Table 9
Areas with the Least Increase (Difference) in Mean Score in Level of Knowledge

Content Areas	Mean increase
Curriculum that matches school vision	.34
Student assessment and evaluation	.55
Student and school objectives, goals, and measures of performance	.84
Fiscal management and oversight	.88
Renewal plan	.94

Table 10
Areas with the Largest Increase (Difference) in Mean Scores in Ability to Access Information

Content Areas	Mean increase
Financial policies	3.04
Marketing strategies	2.79
Health and safety Regulations	2.69
Media and public relations strategies	2.66
Strategies to deal with controversy	2.53

Table 11
Areas with the Least Increase (Difference) in Mean Score in Ability to Access Information

Content Areas	Mean increase
Building an organizational vision	.69
Curriculum that matches school vision	.77
Fiscal management and oversight	1.06
Student assessment and evaluation	1.17
Student and school objectives, goals, and measures of performance	1.18

These results inform us that additional and/or more specific information is needed in the Curriculum and Assessment topical area. In hindsight, this information is not surprising. The Academy curriculum, both in the workbook and as presented by the trainers, was designed to inform participants of multiple curriculum and assessment options available rather than designed as prescriptive or a presentation of one "correct" way to develop curriculum and assessment tools. Since charter schools are incredibly diverse, we intentionally designed the training to not be overly prescriptive; and we wanted to stay away from emphasizing one curriculum over another. Furthermore, there is no way to tell how participants may have reacted if we had presented a specific curriculum and assessment plan. A potential solution to this dilemma—how to provide detailed information without being prescriptive—may be to offer multiple intensive sessions on a variety of "prescriptive" assessment tools for those participants who want this type

of direction while also providing additional sessions and training designed to provoke thought and ideas about alternative curriculum and student and program assessment.

Opening Question: Does your school currently have...(area)? The distinction between the Curriculum and Assessment topical area and the Marketing and Recruitment topical area is further accented in the analysis of the opening question on the Academy evaluation. The opening question for each area asks "Does your school currently have...(area)?" Most of the responses from the pre- and post-evaluation did not show significant increases or decreases. However, Marketing and Recruitment and Curriculum and Assessment did have, respectively, significant increases and decreases in the percentage of participants stating that their school did or did not have the area in question. From the perspective of this opening question (Does your school currently have...(area)?) it appears that participants *increased* their knowledge of "strategies" while at the same time became more aware of their school's lack of policies or specific tools needed to implement appropriate curriculum and assessment tools. The Marketing and Recruitment topical area involves specific strategies to recruit and market one's school. On the other hand, the Curriculum and Assessment topical area focuses on specific information and understanding needed to develop appropriate curriculum and assessment tools. So while participants left the Academy feeling as if they had developed new strategies to accomplish certain tasks, they may have been overwhelmed with the amount of information and work needed to develop appropriate program and student assessments. This analysis provides an alternative explanation for the differences in percentages and mean scores for the two content areas in question.

Open-ended questions. The final question on the post-evaluation asked participants to identify the five areas that they felt they learned the most from the Academy as well as the areas that they felt were not covered sufficiently during the Academy. Additionally, participants were asked on the pre-evaluation to identify areas they felt were most important to charter school development. Participant response to these questions tend to support the findings described above. Tables 12 through 14 present the results from the open-ended questions.

Table 12
Areas Identified as Not Meeting Participant Expectations or as Not Being Covered Sufficiently in the Academy (Post-Evaluation)

Area	Frequency
Student assessment and evaluation	5
Strategies to evaluate the governing board	1
General policies for decisionmaking	1

Only seven participants indicated that there was a specific area that did not meet expectations. However, five of the seven indicated that student assessment and evaluation was the area that was not sufficiently addressed. This finding supports the previous findings from the Academy evaluation. To this extent, care must be taken to sufficiently develop and implement additional training focusing on student assessment and evaluation. The area of student assessment is

especially important considering the fact that this area was selected by participants as one of the most critical areas in the development of a charter school.

Table 13
Areas in Which Participants Learned the Most From the Academy (Post-Evaluation)

Area	Frequency
Developed a business plan and budget	6
Organizational vision	5
Leadership ability	3
Program evaluation	3
Renewal plan	2

Table 14
Six Most Frequently Identified Areas as Most Important to the Development of a Charter School (Pre-Evaluation)

Area	Frequency
Leadership ability	9
Strategies to deal with controversy	9
Student assessment and evaluation	9
Developed a business plan and budget	8
Strategies to gain public, community and school board support	8
Staff and student handbook	8

In contrast to the result presented in Table 12, 19 participants responded positively about areas in which they had learned the most. Participants reported that they learned most about developing a business plan, creating an organizational vision, and developing leadership ability. Further, Table 14 points out the key areas identified by participants as most important to the development of a charter school. These results bode well for our original core content areas (leadership needs) and the training developed to correspond to these needs. Specific sessions were developed to deal with leadership ability, dealing with controversy, developing a business plan, gaining public support, and developing a staff and student handbook. Additionally, we did have sessions specifically designed to address the development of student assessment and evaluation tools. However, our training methods and curriculum for assessment and evaluation did not meet the needs of all Academy participants. So while it is unfortunate that Academy participants did not obtain all the information they needed in this area, it is informative to understand exactly why this session did not work and what we need to change.

Overall, the majority of comments made by participants were positive. Specifically, participants felt that there was a tremendous amount of information available and they felt that having practitioners as trainers was very beneficial. A number of participants commented on how wonderful it was to have time to hear the "stories" of charter school founders and the ability and

willingness of the trainers to sit down and talk for hours at a time. We think that it is extremely important to have at least one, if not more, charter school founders participate in leadership training sessions for developing charter school founders. The ability to learn from those who have experienced the trials and tribulations of charter school development cannot be overemphasized.

Two specific suggestions arose out of the multitude of participant comments. One, a number of participants commented on the confusion that arose when trainers and/or participants began to talk about state-specific information. This is a valid critique of our current training strategy, but one that cannot be fully overcome unless the training is done at a state-specific level. A possible solution to this problem, which we will incorporate into next year's Academy, is to invite state charter school contacts to the Academy training to hold a half day session with representatives from the respective states. Second, three teams commented on the lack of ethnic diversity in the trainer cohort. This is a valid concern and will be addressed in future training sessions and in the training curriculum. A lesson to be learned from these participant suggestions is that ethnic diversity among trainers is equally, if not more, important than diversity in thought and culture.

Session Evaluations

A session evaluation was administered at the completion of each Academy session. Through a selection of open-ended questions and yes/no questions, participants identified the main points of each session, what they liked in the session, and what they would like to see improved in the session. The questionnaire concludes with an overall session evaluation scale ranging from 5 (excellent) to 1 (poor). The following data and analysis draw mainly from the results of the overall session evaluation scale.

The session evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. Thirteen out of 18 total sessions rated a score of 4 (very good) or above. Only two sessions, case study in visioning and evaluation of progress, received overall scores below 3.5. These two sessions are best analyzed in the context of trainer observations and our own observations and experience with the Academy. The full results from the session evaluations are found in Appendix F.

Findings: Session Evaluations and Trainer Observations

The main concerns expressed by Academy participants revolved around the different styles and methods used by Academy trainers. Participants noted that some of the sessions were "unorganized", "too touchy-feely", "too much of a lecture", or "not interactive enough". In some instances, seemingly opposing comments were made by different participants about the same session. In other words, a single session might be too interactive for some participants while not being interactive enough for others. The diversity of participant learning styles and approaches did not allow trainers to use exclusively one type of training technique or strategy. While this doesn't directly impact the leadership needs of charter school founders and leaders, it does impact the type of training required by a diverse collection of charter school founders. Indeed, in a training session, academy, or institute, the methods used to communicate relevant information is just as important, if not more so, than the actual information and training curriculum.

The comments and suggestions for the two lowest scoring sessions reflected this discontinuity between trainer techniques and participant expectations of Academy curriculum. A number of comments about the session *evaluation of progress*, the lowest scoring session, focused on the "lack of organization" and the lack of a set lesson plan. This "lack of organization" as perceived by the participants, however, was intentional on the part of the trainer. The trainer for this particular session did not want to prescribe a specific evaluation plan or specific evaluation tools. The trainers use of an open approach upset some participants who wanted to learn a specific evaluation plan that they could implement immediately. However, in this same session a number of participants commented that they enjoyed the session because it made them think about what really needs to go into a program evaluation and the need to start planning immediately. The other low-scoring session, *case study in visioning*, met with similar difficulties. Some participants commented that this session called for too much interaction, while other participants wrote that they loved this session because of the interaction. These examples demonstrate the point that no training style or method can encompass all learning styles and ways of thinking.

This dilemma dramatically influences our own current work including the development of a profile of the leadership needs of charter school founders. On the one hand, it is relatively simple to identify the specific needs of charter school founders. After the needs are identified, information and resources can be collected and transformed into appropriate training curriculum and resources. The difficulty lies in developing appropriate training *strategies* to go hand in hand with the training curriculum. The dilemma, then, is to develop a *teaching strategy* for groups which by their very nature have a passion for different *teaching strategies*. The solution, most likely, is that there is not one teaching strategy for charter school founders and leaders. Just as information must be state specific, so must teaching strategies be molded to the local and state context of the charter school founders participating in training. Our job, then, is twofold. One, we must develop the appropriate training (curriculum, information, resources, and so on) to be used by trainers and accessed by charter school founders and, two, we must develop instructional strategies which dually have the flexibility to be used in a multistate context and to be molded by the needs of state specific trainers.

Summary

The NWREL Charter School Training Academy contributed immensely to the education of the charter school developers involved in the Academy, our own current development of a leadership profile of charter school founders, and our ongoing project to develop a model leadership training program for charter school founders. Specifically, the Training Academy allowed us to further develop the information base of requirements and needs of charter school developers and, perhaps more importantly, the Academy gave us the opportunity to use different types of training methods and observe which methods best meet the diverse needs of charter school founders. In an effort to summarize our findings, we present a number of recommendations concerning charter school training and five additions to the profile of the leadership needs of charter school founders.

Recommendations

1. The experience and story telling of and by the trainers was important and beneficial to all Academy participants. Training for charter school developers should include access to, and training by, successful current and past charter school founders.

2. Training sessions should be organized and stay on target. Some sessions should be facilitated and have a set structure which allows for both interaction and direct instruction. Sessions should vary according to content and audience.

3. Participant sharing is important. Some sessions, or at least a section of each day, should allow time for participants to share ideas and experiences.

4. Sessions should be diverse in style and methodology. For instance, sessions on program evaluation could be designed to provide concrete examples; or sessions could focus on different types of program evaluations and aim toward provoking critical thought.

5. Training sessions focusing on aligning curriculum and assessment and designing program and student evaluation instruments should be emphasized. A variety of teaching strategies and methods could be used in curriculum and assessment sessions.

6. The training cohort should be diverse both in ethnicity and perspective.

7. State-specific sessions should be designed and utilized. Using state contacts or state representatives to lead these sessions is recommended.

Leadership Needs (Leadership Profile Additions)

1. Charter school leaders need high quality, structured information on aligning curriculum and assessment, and developing student and program assessment instruments and strategies.

2. Charter school leaders need the ability to share experiences with other new charter school developers and learn from each other. Charter school founders need to network.

3. Charter school leaders need the ability to talk with experienced charter school founders and learn about different ways of approaching problems and obstacles.

4. Charter school leaders need to be exposed to new ways of thinking about public education and their own role in improving public education.

Section Six: Summary of Findings

The purpose of this report is to present a profile of the leadership needs of charter school founders and document the research and development during the first year of this project to develop a model leadership training program for charter school founders and leaders. The findings in this report are taken from four specific components of our work: (1) initial and on-going research and development of core content areas of leadership needs; (2) pre-inventory of eligible charter school founders; (3) convening of a design team of charter school experts; and (4) design and implementation of training curriculum in a week-long pilot Leadership Training Academy.

For the most part, the original core content areas have not been significantly altered. Start-up logistics, curriculum standards and assessment, governance and management, community relations, and regulatory issues continue to be the main leadership areas in which charter schools founders need to have expertise or have the ability to access expertise. However, ongoing research in all of the aforementioned areas has led to a number of new topics within the core content areas as well as increased understanding regarding the type of training and experience needed by charter school founders.

Ongoing research into the five core content areas highlighted, in addition to the original core content areas, the need for leaders to (1) be aware of curriculum options, (2) have the skills to develop school policies, (3) have the skills to manage organizational transitions and growth, (4) develop positive relationships with sponsoring or neighboring districts, and (5) develop a marketing strategy. Additional research also reemphasized the need to understand special education requirements. The pre-inventory application reemphasized the specific content areas focusing on (1) developing student and program assessments, (2) developing governance policies, (3) developing a financial plan, (4) obtaining facilities, and (5) accessing ancillary and external services. The design team highlighted six additions in the core content areas. Specifically, the design team focused on (1) the difference between pre-operational and operational charter schools, (2) the need for a strong organizational vision, (3) the need for an agreed upon organizational structure, (4) the need for founders to evaluate the political and community environment (reality check), (5) the difference in leadership needs based upon type of school (new or conversion), and (6) the different types of accountability (fiscal, public, and academic). The Academy experience highlighted the need for (1) practitioner trainers allowing for experience sharing and learning, (2) diverse training styles depending on audience and content, (3) state-specific information and sessions, (4) time for participants to share ideas among each other and build a network of developers, and (5) increased focus and attention on aligning curriculum with assessment and developing appropriate program and student assessment tools.

The final profile of the leadership needs of charter school founders and leaders, as discussed through Section four, and the additional training requirements highlighted in Section five, are graphically displayed on the following page.

A Profile of the Leadership Needs of Charter School Founders and Leaders

Content Areas	Topics of Knowledge and Skills
Start-Up Logistics	Reality checks (political environment, fiscal feasibility, sustaining energy, relationships) Writing a good application Making things different (resource allocation, power structure, instructional changes) Building organizational vision Formation of core founding group Establishment of a legal entity Acquisition of a facility Availability of necessary start-up financing Acquisition of professional services (i.e., legal, accounting) Develop a business plan
Curriculum Standards and Assessment Development	Development of academically rigorous curriculum true to school vision Accountability and evaluation: Development of student and school measures of performance Curriculum options Renewing the charter
Governance/ Management	Organizational structure: governance, management, operations Personnel issues Develop internal policies (finance, personnel, student discipline, child abuse, enrollment, etc.) Evaluation of governing board Managing growth Liability issues (insurance workers' compensation) Contracting for services
Community Relations: Internal and External	Dealing with controversy Dealing with interest groups Media relations Community relations Relationships with district and/or sponsoring agency Communicating parent expectations Marketing the charter school
Regulatory Issues	Equity in serving student populations Special education requirements Assuring health and safety Individual rights Religious issues Student records and freedom of information Civil rights regulations Parental involvement requirements State laws and regulations Types of charter schools (for profit, private conversion) Awareness of legal options
Leadership Training Requirements	High quality, structured information on student and program assessment plans and tools The ability to share experiences and learn from other new charter school developers The ability to talk with, and learn from, experienced charter school practitioners Exposure to new ways of thinking about public education and their own role in improving public education State specific information

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Appendix A

Charter School ID#_____

Charter School Pre-Inventory Application
Model Leadership Training Program for Charter Schools

1998 Charter School Leadership Training Academy
July 20-24, 1998 (Monday-Friday)
Portland, Oregon

Charter school applicants for the 1998 Charter School Leadership Training Academy are asked to complete this pre-inventory application and return it to NWREL by Friday, January 30, 1998.

We recommend that prospective members of a school team complete this pre-inventory application together. If more space is needed for any item, attach comments on a separate page. Should there be any questions about responses to the pre-inventory items, please contact either Joyce Ley or Brett Lane at NWREL (1-800-547-6339, Ext. 553 for Joyce and Ext. 559 for Brett).

Return the completed pre-inventory application by Friday, January 30, 1998:

MAIL to: Joyce Ley or Brett Lane
NWREL
101 SW Main, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204

or FAX to: Joyce Ley or Brett Lane
1-503-275-0654

Pre-inventory items:

1. **School demographic information:**

   a) Which best describes your charter school: ___ newly created
   ___ previously a "regular" public school
   ___ previously a private school

   b) What is the name of your charter school? _____

   c) When did will your school first operate to serve students? Year_____ Month _____

   d) Your school's address: _____

   _____

   e) List names of the prospective members of your team and place a check mark (✓) by those who assisted in completing this application:

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

   f) Name of contact person for your school:

   _____

   g) Telephone for contact person: _____ FAX for contact person: _____

   Email address for contact person: _____

2. **What does your charter school give to kids that the "regular" public school cannot?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. **Student demographic information:**

a) Complete the following student enrollment matrix.

Grade level	Grade included in charter: Circle Yes or No		Current (1997-98) enrollment	Anticipated (1998-99) enrollment
K	Yes	No		
1	Yes	No		
2	Yes	No		
3	Yes	No		
4	Yes	No		
5	Yes	No		
6	Yes	No		
7	Yes	No		
8	Yes	No		
9	Yes	No		
10	Yes	No		
11	Yes	No		
12	Yes	No		
Total				

b) Complete the following special needs student enrollment matrix.

Total student enrollment: _____ **Percent minority:** _____ **Percent disabled:** _____ **Percent eligible for free and reduced lunch:** _____

4. **Policies and procedures:** Use the following matrix as a checklist to indicate if your school has policies and/or procedures in place for each respective topic. Be sure to indicate if your team feels a need for additional help with any of the topics even if your school does have policies in place.

Topic	Policy/procedures in place	No policy or procedure at this time	Want additional help
Student recruitment/selection			
Teacher hiring/firing			
Student performance assessment			
Program performance assessment			
Roles and relationships of founders, teachers, parents, and administrator			
Health and safety			
Fiscal management			
Day-to-day operations			
Other:			

5. **Technical assistance concerns:**

Complete the following matrix reflecting concerns of your school. If you believe that additional help would contribute to the success of your school, check the appropriate box and comment in the last column:

Concern	Yes	No	Additional help wanted	Comments
Has your school established its mission in writing?				
Does your school have adequate facilities?				
Is your school accredited?				
Does your school have adequate resources for ancillary services (i.e., transportation, library, health)?				
Does your school utilize any federal programs (i.e., Title 1, special education)?				
Does your school have access to external resources (those from outside the school and/or community)?				
Does your school have a financial plan?				
Other:				

6. **Describe your greatest hurdles in establishing your charter school:**

7. **Describe what you expect your school to look like in two or three years:**

8. **Describe why your school would be a good candidate for participation in this Training Academy:**

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PORTLAND, OREGON 97204

Appendix B

Model Leadership Training Program
1998 Design Team

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Appendix C

Academy Trainers

Joe Lucent
Co-Founder
Fenton Avenue Charter School
Lakeview Terrace, CA

Terri Austin
Founder and Teacher
Chinook Charter School
Ft. Wainwright, AK

Doug Thomas
Center for School Change
Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
and Co-Founder
New Country School
Henderson, MN

Sue Bragato
Executive Director
California Network of Educational Charters
(CANEC)
and Co-Founder
San Carlos Charter Learning Center
San Carlos, CA

Tom Pickrell
Directory of Legal Services
Arizona School Boards Association
Phoenix, AR

Bill Windler
Senior Consultant for School Improvement
Colorado Department of Education
Denver, CO

Bill Thompson
ABS School Services
Arizona

Joyce Ley
Director
Rural Education Program
NWREL

Brett Lane
Coordinator
Charter School Leadership Training Program
NWREL

Appendix D
CHARTER SCHOOL TRAINING ACADEMY PRE-EVALUATION

School/Organization: _____

Operational Status

- ❑ Operational (Entering second year in Fall 1998)
- ❑ Pre-operational (Entering first year in Fall 1998)
- ❑ Planning (Currently in the planning phase)

Affiliation

- ❑ Parent
- ❑ Community Member
- ❑ Other: _____
- ❑ Teacher
- ❑ Administrator

Do you consider yourself a charter school founder? ❑ Yes ❑ No

The following sections list a number of topical areas that relate to charter school development and sustainability. Following the structure presented below, please rate your schools current status in the listed areas, your own current level of knowledge in the listed areas, and your ability to access appropriate information in each area by circling the most appropriate response. One (1) represents a low level of knowledge, understanding or ability to access information and ten (10) represents a high level of knowledge, understanding or ability to access information.

Please rate your schools status, your own current level of knowledge in the following areas, and your ability to access information or resources in the specific area:

Start-up Areas:	Does your school currently have:		Rate your current level of knowledge in:	Rate your ability to access information or resources relevant to:
• Developed a quality written application	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Strategies to identify, evaluate and obtain a facility for your school	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Developed a business plan and budget	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Established legal status	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Access to professional services	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Written mission statement	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Others _____	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A

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Governance and Management Areas:	Does your school currently have:		Rate your current level of knowledge in:	Rate your ability to access information or resources relevant to:
• Organizational vision	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• By-laws outlining the organizational structure	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• General policies for decisionmaking	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Strategies to evaluate the governing board	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Leadership ability	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Strategies to make the transition from pre-operation to operational status	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Fiscal management and oversight	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Others _____	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A

Curriculum and Assessment Areas:	Does your school currently have:		Rate your current level of knowledge in:	Rate your ability to access information or resources relevant to:
• Curriculum that matches school vision	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Student and school objectives, goals, and measures of performance	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Student assessment and evaluation	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Program evaluation	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Renewal plan	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Others _____	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A

Policy Areas:	Does your school currently have:		Rate your current level of knowledge in:	Rate your ability to access information or resources relevant to:
• Personnel policies	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Staff and student handbook	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Discipline policies	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Financial policies	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Others _____	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A

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Marketing and Recruitment Areas:	Does your school currently have:		Rate your current level of knowledge in:	Rate your ability to access information or resources relevant to:
• Media and public relations strategies	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Marketing strategies	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Strategies to deal with controversy	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Strategies to gain public, community, and school board support	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Strategies to effectively communicate and involve parents	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Others _____	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A

Regulatory Issues:	Does your school currently have policies regarding:		Rate your current understanding of:	Rate your ability to access information or resources relevant to:
• Special education requirements	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Health and Safety regulations	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Civil rights issues/equity issues (personnel and students)	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Parental involvement requirements	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Others _____	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A

To complete the evaluation

After you complete each of the items above, please review the topical areas and circle five specific areas you feel are most important to the development of your school. If there are additional areas that are not listed which you feel need to be addressed, please list them in the space below.

Additional Areas:

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Appendix D
CHARTER SCHOOL TRAINING ACADEMY POST-EVALUATION

School/Organization: _____

Operational Status

- ❑ Operational (Entering second year in Fall 1998)
- ❑ Pre-operational (Entering first year in Fall 1998)
- ❑ Planning (Currently in the planning phase)

Affiliation

- ❑ Parent
- ❑ Community Member
- ❑ Other: _____
- ❑ Teacher
- ❑ Administrator

Do you consider yourself a charter school founder? ❑ Yes ❑ No

The following sections list a number of topical areas that relate to charter school development and sustainability. Following the structure presented below, please rate your schools current status in the listed areas, your own current level of knowledge in the listed areas, and your ability to access appropriate information in each area by circling the most appropriate response. One (1) represents a low level of knowledge, understanding or ability to access information and ten (10) represents a high level of knowledge, understanding or ability to access information.

Please rate your schools status, your own current level of knowledge in the following areas, and your ability to access information or resources in the specific area:

Start-up Areas:	Does your school currently have:		Rate your current level of knowledge in:	Rate your ability to access information or resources relevant to:
• Developed a quality written application	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Strategies to identify, evaluate and obtain a facility for your school	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Developed a business plan and budget	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Established legal status	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Access to professional services	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Written mission statement	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Others _____	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A

Governance and Management Areas:	Does your school currently have:		Rate your current level of knowledge in:	Rate your ability to access information or resources relevant to:
• Organizational vision	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• By-laws outlining the organizational structure	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• General policies for decisionmaking	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Strategies to evaluate the governing board	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Leadership ability	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Strategies to make the transition from pre-operation to operational status	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Fiscal management and oversight	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Others _____	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A

Curriculum and Assessment Areas:	Does your school currently have:		Rate your current level of knowledge in:	Rate your ability to access information or resources relevant to:
• Curriculum that matches school vision	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Student and school objectives, goals, and measures of performance	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Student assessment and evaluation	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Program evaluation	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Renewal plan	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Others _____	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A

Policy Areas:	Does your school currently have:		Rate your current level of knowledge in:	Rate your ability to access information or resources relevant to:
• Personnel policies	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Staff and student handbook	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Discipline policies	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Financial policies	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Others _____	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A

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• Marketing strategies	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Strategies to deal with controversy	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Strategies to gain public, community, and school board support	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Strategies to effectively communicate and involve parents	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Others _____ _____	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A

Regulatory Issues:	Does your school currently have policies regarding:		Rate your current understanding of:	Rate your ability to access information or resources relevant to:
• Special education requirements	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Health and Safety regulations	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Civil rights issues/equity issues (personnel and students)	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Parental involvement requirements	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A
• Others _____	Yes	No	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 N/A

To complete the evaluation

After you complete each of the items above, please review the topical areas and circle five specific areas in which you feel you learned the most from the Charter School Leadership Training Academy. Put an X near any area that did not meet your expectations or you felt was not covered sufficiently in the Academy. If there are additional areas that are not listed which you feel need to be addressed, please list them in the space below.

Additional Areas:

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Appendix E
Pre- and Post-Evaluation Results

	Does your school currently have: (% responding yes)	Rate your current level of knowledge: (mean scores)		Rate ability to access information: (mean scores)	
	pre/post	pre	post	pre	post
Start-up Areas:					
Developing and writing a quality application	75.6/ 72.3	5.15	7.71	6.44	8.44
Strategies to identifying, evaluating and obtain a facility for your school	64.1/ 78.4	5.78	7.63	6.11	8.09
Developing a business plan and budget	66.7/ 64.9	5.87	7.57	6.68	8.22
Established legal status	57.1/ 62.2	5.16	7.27	6.14	7.80
Access to professional services	73.8/ 75.7	6.14	7.74	6.39	8.11
Written mission statement	85.7/ 83.8	7.20	8.42	7.24	8.57
Governance and Management Areas:					
Building an organizational vision	85.4/ 88.9	7.16	8.11	7.64	8.33
By-laws outlining the organizational structure	72.5/ 66.7	6.08	7.36	6.87	8.11
General policies for decisionmaking	74.4/ 75.0	6.36	7.86	6.87	8.25
Strategies to evaluate the governing board	38.5/ 41.7	4.65	6.54	5.36	7.74
Leadership ability	95.1/ 91.4	7.08	8.47	7.49	8.69
Strategies to make the transition from pre-operational to operational status	69.4/ 80.0	5.97	7.63	6.34	8.13
Fiscal management and oversight	71.4/ 75.0	6.32	7.21	7.11	8.17
Curriculum and Assessment Areas					
Curriculum that matches school vision	90.2/ 76.5	7.08	7.42	7.80	8.57
Student and school objectives, goals, and measures of performance	82.9/ 68.6	6.63	7.47	7.17	8.34
Student assessment and evaluation	80.5/ 68.6	6.47	7.03	7.05	8.22
Program evaluation	46.2/ 42.9	5.77	6.78	6.34	8.03
Renewal plan	41.0/ 32.3	5.03	5.97	5.94	8.00

Appendix E
Pre- and Post-Evaluation Results

	Does your school currently have: (% responding yes)	Rate your current level of knowledge: (mean scores)		Rate ability to access information: (mean scores)	
	pre/post	pre	post	pre	post
Policy Areas:					
Personnel policies	64.3/ 48.6	5.90	7.36	6.61	8.60
Staff and student handbook	52.4/ 32.4	5.63	7.21	6.40	8.46
Discipline policies	59.5/ 51.4	5.86	7.28	6.83	8.63
Financial policies	65.0/ 66.7	6.08	8.00	5.42	8.46
Marketing and Recruitment Areas:					
Media and public relations strategies	43.6/ 51.5	4.92	6.94	5.49	8.15
Marketing strategies	30.0/ 39.4	4.77	7.23	5.44	8.22
Strategies to deal with controversy	39.0/ 54.5	4.67	7.09	5.56	8.09
Strategies to gain public, community, and school board support	55.0/ 66.7	5.11	7.18	5.69	8.09
Strategies to effectively communicate and involve parents	70.0/ 78.8	5.89	7.82	6.53	8.49
Regulatory Issues					
Special education requirements	46.3/ 51.5	4.58	6.34	5.72	8.23
Health and Safety regulations	58.5/ 57.6	5.03	6.42	5.5	8.19
Civil rights issues/Equity issues	65.9/ 60.6	5.26	7.27	6.14	8.41
Parental involvement requirements	60.0/ 51.5	6.38	8.09	6.73	8.58

Appendix F

Overall scores for session evaluations

Scale: 5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Good, 2 = Fair, 1= Poor

Session name:	Mean score for overall evaluation:
planning phase	4.20
operational phase	4.17
core founding group	4.30
case study in visioning	3.43
writing a good application	4.09
evaluation of progress	3.09
facility issues	3.96
legal status issues	4.17
business plan	4.17
leadership	3.91
transitions	4.21
personnel issues	4.30
policy development	4.61
media panel	4.56
marketing your school	4.23
external community relations	4.60
dealing with controversy	3.88
special education/federal regulatory issues	4.43
state regulatory issues	4.00
all sessions	4.11

Charter School Training Academy - Session Evaluation Form

Session Name: _____

We would appreciate your help in evaluating this session of the Charter School Training Academy. Your input will help us develop a high quality training academy for charter schools. Please fill out this form and return as you exit.

Affiliation

❑ Parent ❑ Community Member ❑ Other: _____
❑ Teacher ❑ Administrator

Do you consider yourself a founder? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Overall evaluation of session

What did you feel were the main points of this session?

What did you like about this session?

What would you like to see improved about this session?

	Yes	Somewhat	No
Did the session meet your expectations?	❑	❑	❑
Would you recommend this session to colleagues?	❑	❑	❑
Will you be able to apply lessons from the session in developing or operating your charter school?	❑	❑	❑
Do you feel the session was well-organized?	❑	❑	❑
Are you interested in staying in touch with workshop presenters and attendees?	❑	❑	❑
Do you feel the resource materials (handouts, etc.) will be useful in developing or operating your charter school?	❑	❑	❑

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
OVERALL SESSION EVALUATION:	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Comments

Please provide any additional comments regarding this session.

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